MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

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MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

AN INTRODUCTION

EDITED BY

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Author of "These Times," "Including Horace,"
"The New Era in American Poetry," etc.

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AN INTRODUCTION

"AMERICA'S poetic renascence" is no longer a phrase; it is a fact. The last few decades have witnessed a sudden and amazing growth in the volume as well as in the quality of the work of our poets. A new spirit, energetic, alert, penetrative, seems to have stirred these states, and a countryful of writers has responded to it. No longer confined to one or two literary centers, the impulse to create is everywhere; there is scarcely a remote corner which has not produced its laureate.

It must be made plain, however, that not even the most ardent admirers of modern American poetry believe that the new poets are the only poets that we have produced, or that they are necessarily greater than the old. What they do believe is this: that the modern poets are different and must be granted their own points of difference. Times change and tastes change with them. The old-fashioned mythological verses and the excellent but too often merely moralizing poems of the immediate past could not be written to-day. Walt Whitman, with his emphasis on the beauty that lurks in familiar things and his insistence on the "divine average," was the greatest of the moderns who showed the grandeur of simplicity, the rich poetry of everyday. "The cow crunching with depressed head surpasses any statue," he wrote; he declared that "a leaf of grass is no less

than the journey-work of the stars," and that the common "running blackberry is fit to adorn the parlors of heaven."

Many, though not all of the poets that have succeeded Whitman have found a fresh, living and vigorous poetry in a world of honest and sometimes harsh reality. They respond to the spirit of their times. The singer to-day writes about things unknown to the poet of yesterday. Not only has his view been changed, his vision has widened. He can employ any incident, any subject, instead of being restricted to legendary, classical or traditionally "poetic" themes. In learning to distinguish real beauty from mere prettiness, he is expressing the deepest aspects of life and, in so doing, he is recording not, as has been charged, "more truth than poetry" but more truth *and* poetry.

An editorial in the conservative *New York Times,* which has been none too hospitable to innovators, declared a few months ago, "The so-called society-verse, the didactic rhyme, the musical love-poem that pleased mainly because, in language and sentiment, it was so remote from everyday, prosaic experience, has lost in popularity—superseded, apparently, by a poetry that delights in searching for stronger beauty and in portraying rugged realities."

With the choice of more familiar subjects there has come a further simplification:—the use of a simpler and less stilted language. The rare or rhetorical words have been practically discarded in favor of words that are part of our daily vocabulary; actual speech instead of ornate literary phrasing has become the medium of the

modern poet. The "peradventures," "forsooths," "alackadays" and "O thous" have gone. His language, that used to be borrowed almost exclusively from literature, comes now almost entirely out of life. And as his speech has grown less elaborate, so have the forms that embody it. The intricate versification has given way to lines that reflect and suggest the tones of direct talk, even of ordinary conversation. The result of this has been a great gain both in sincerity and intensity; for it has enabled the poet of to-day to put greater emphasis on his emotion than on the shell that covers it—he dwells with richer detail on the *matter* than the manner.

These changes can be easily seen and studied in the work of most of our recent and particularly our contemporary makers of verse. Notice, for instance, in the direct but fully-flavored blank verse of Robert Frost, how the words are so chosen and arranged that the speaker is almost heard on the printed page. Observe how, beneath these native sounds, we hear the accents of his people walking the New England farms and hillsides. Listen to Vachel Lindsay and catch with him the buoyant and even burly music of camp-meetings, negro "revivals" and religious gatherings. Read him aloud, and hear how his words roll with the solemnity of a great prayer or snap, crackle, wink and dance with all the humorous rhythms of a piece of "rag-time." Note how, in the work of E. L. Masters, the author explores the borderland between poetry and prose. Or listen to the quiet but deeply-moving singing of James Oppenheim, music of a biblical quality, like mystical modern psalms. Hear how, without rhyme or a strict

rhythm, Carl Sandburg makes little melodies that are sheer music and how, by combining vision with the simplest talk (even with slang), he achieves magic. Examine the delicate verbal designs in the almost carved lines of Emily Dickinson, " H.D.," Adelaide Crapsey.

And, on the other hand, turn to those who, by adapting and sharpening old forms, are no less original. Notice how Edwin Arlington Robinson uses the strictest rhymes and most conventional metres and, by the use of a subtle intellect and even subtler sympathy, makes them more " modern " than the freest free-verse. Examine the homely and mystical verses of Anna Hempstead Branch. Read the outspoken lyrics of Sara Teasdale and see how frank and straightforward these lines are, how different from either the tinkling or over-sentimental love-songs that passed for genuine emotion. Observe how breezy, spirited and full of the tang of native sounds and scenes are the songs of Richard Hovey, Bliss Carman, James Whitcomb Riley, H. H. Knibbs, the two Benéts and a half a dozen others.

Study the highly decorative poetry of Amy Lowell; see how she has responded to Oriental and French influences and how she has incorporated them in her work with a touch entirely her own. Witness how, even in the light verses of Paul Laurence Dunbar and T. A. Daly, there is dignity as well as humor; how in their use of dialect, they have emphasized, paradoxical as it may seem, an American quality—particularly the fusion of native and foreign tongues and temperaments. Even our deprecated " comic newspaper poetry " has taken on something of a native character; nothing is more remark-

able than the rising standards in our satirical and frankly humorous verse.

I will not go into greater detail concerning the growth of an American spirit in our literature nor point out how, in many of the poems in the present collection, the authors have responded to indigenous forces deeper than their backgrounds. I will, however, call attention in passing to the fact that, young as this nation is compared to her transatlantic cousins, she is already being supplied with the stuff of legends, ballads and even epics. The modern singer, discarding imported myths, has turned to celebrate his own folk-tales. It is therefore particularly interesting to observe how the figure of Lincoln has been treated by the best of our living poets. I have accordingly included seven poems by seven writers, each differing in manner, technique and angle of vision.

For the rest, I leave the casual reader as well as the student to discover the awakened vigor and energy in this, the most poetic period in native literature. Realizing that this brief gathering is not so much a summary as an introduction, still it is hoped that, in spite of its obvious limitations, this collection will draw the reader on to a closer consideration of the poets here included —even, possibly, to those omitted. The purpose of such an anthology must always be to arouse an interest rather than to satisfy a curiosity. And if it brings its owners nearer the source, it will have fulfilled its prime function. Such, at least, is the hope and aim of the present editor.

L. U.

August, 1919.
New York City.

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MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

CHARTLESS

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet now I know how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in Heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

Emily Dickinson

[Born in 1830 at Amherst, Mass.
Died there in 1886.]

BECLOUDED

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How some one treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

Emily Dickinson [1830-1886]

A BOOK

There is no frigate like a book
  To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page
  Of prancing poetry.
This traverse may the poorest take
  Without oppress of toll;
How frugal is the chariot
  That bears a human soul!

Emily Dickinson [1830-1886]

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S STORY

The night was thick and hazy
  When the " Piccadilly Daisy "
Carried down the crew and captain in the sea;
  And I think the water drowned 'em;
  For they never, never found 'em,
And I know they didn't come ashore with me.

Oh! 'twas very sad and lonely
  When I found myself the only
Population on this cultivated shore;
  But I've made a little tavern
  In a rocky little cavern,
And I sit and watch for people at the door.

I spent no time in looking
  For a girl to do my cooking,
As I'm quite a clever hand at making stews;

But I had that fellow Friday,
Just to keep the tavern tidy,
And to put a Sunday polish on my shoes.

I have a little garden
That I'm cultivating lard in,
As the things I eat are rather tough and dry;
For I live on toasted lizards,
Prickly pears, and parrot gizzards,
And I'm really very fond of beetle-pie.

The clothes I had were furry,
And it made me fret and worry
When I found the moths were eating off the hair;
And I had to scrape and sand 'em,
And I boiled 'em and I tanned 'em,
Till I got the fine morocco suit I wear.

I sometimes seek diversion
In a family excursion
With the few domestic animals you see;
And we take along a carrot
As refreshment for the parrot,
And a little can of jungleberry tea.

Then we gather as we travel,
Bits of moss and dirty gravel,
And we chip off little specimens of stone;
And we carry home as prizes
Funny bugs, of handy sizes,
Just to give the day a scientific tone.

If the roads are wet and muddy
We remain at home and study,—
For the Goat is very clever at a sum,—
And the Dog, instead of fighting,
Studies ornamental writing,
While the Cat is taking lessons on the drum.

We retire at eleven,
And we rise again at seven;
And I wish to call attention, as I close,
To the fact that all the scholars
Are correct about their collars,
And particular in turning out their toes.

Charles E. Carryl

[Father of Guy Wetmore Carryl.
Born, 1841, in New York City.]

LITTLE BOY BLUE[1]

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and staunch he stands;
The little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new,
And the soldier was passing fair;
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

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" Now don't you go till I come," he said,
" And don't you make any noise! "
So, toddling off to his trundle bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys;
And, as he was dreaming, an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue—
Oh! the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true!

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face;
And they wonder, as waiting the long years through
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
Since he kissed them and put them there.

Eugene Field

[Born, 1850, in St. Louis, Mo.
Died, 1895, in Chicago, Ill.]

SEEIN' THINGS [1]

I ain't afraid uv snakes or toads, or bugs or worms or mice,
An' things 'at girls are skeered uv I think are awful nice!
I'm pretty brave I guess; an' yet I hate to go to bed,
For, when I'm tucked up warm an' snug an' when my prayers are said,

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Mother tells me "Happy Dreams" an' takes away the light,
An' leaves me lyin' all alone an' seein' things at night!

Sometimes they're in the corner, sometimes they're by the door,
Sometimes they're all a-standin' in the middle uv the floor;
Sometimes they are a-sittin' down, sometimes they're walkin' round
So softly and so creepy-like they never make a sound!
Sometimes they are as black as ink, an' other times they're white—
But color ain't no difference when you see things at night!

Once, when I licked a feller 'at had just moved on our street,
An' father sent me up to bed without a bite to eat,
I woke up in the dark an' saw things standin' in a row,
A-lookin' at me cross-eyed an' p'intin' at me—*so!*
Oh, my! I wuz so skeered 'at time I never slep' a mite—
It's almost alluz when I'm bad I see things at night!

Lucky thing I ain't a girl or I'd be skeered to death!
Bein' I'm a boy, I duck my head an' hold my breath.
An' I am, oh *so* sorry I'm a naughty boy, an' then
I promise to be better an' I say my prayers again!
Gran'ma tells me that's the only way to make it right
When a feller has been wicked an' sees things at night!

An' so when other naughty boys would coax me into sin,
I try to skwush the Tempter's voice 'at urges me within;
An' when they's pie for supper, or cakes 'at's big an' nice,
I want to—but I do not pass my plate f'r them things
twice!
No, ruther let Starvation wipe me slowly out o' sight
Than I should keep a-livin' on an' seein' things at night!

Eugene Field [1850-1895]

A PRAYER

Teach me, Father, how to go
Softly as the grasses grow;
Hush my soul to meet the shock
Of the wild world as a rock;
But my spirit, propt with power,
Make as simple as a flower.
Let the dry heart fill its cup,
Like a poppy looking up;
Let life lightly wear her crown
Like a poppy looking down,
When its heart is filled with dew,
And its life begins anew.

Teach me, Father, how to be
Kind and patient as a tree.
Joyfully the crickets croon
Under the shady oak at noon;
Beetle, on his mission bent,
Tarries in that cooling tent,

Let me, also, cheer a spot,
Hidden field or garden grot—
Place where passing souls can rest
On the way and be their best.

Edwin Markham

[Born, 1852, at Oregon City, Ore. Now living on Staten Island, N. Y.]

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE *

When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road—
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of earth,
Dashed through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;
Then mixed a laughter with the serious stuff.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The smack and tang of elemental things:
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;
The good-will of the rain that loves all leaves;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well;

* See pages 47, 50, 108, 119, 123, 144.

The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The secrecy of streams that make their way
Beneath the mountain to the rifted rock;
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind—
To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky.

Sprung from the West,
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve:—
To send the keen axe to the root of wrong,
Clearing a free way for the feet of God.
And evermore he burned to do his deed
With the fine stroke and gesture of a king:
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow;
The conscience of him testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.

So came the Captain with the mighty heart;
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,
He held the ridgepole up, and spiked again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place—
Held the long purpose like a growing tree—

Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

Edwin Markham [1852-]

SUNRISE

The lean coyote, prowler of the night,
Slips to his rocky fastnesses,
Jack-rabbits noiselessly shuttle among the sage-brush,
And from the castellated cliffs,
Rock-ravens launch their proud black sails upon the day.
The wild horses troop back to their pastures.

The poplar-trees watch beside the irrigation-ditches.
Orioles, whose nests sway in the cotton-wood trees by the ditch-side, begin to twitter.
All shy things, breathless, watch
The thin white skirts of dawn,
The dancer of the sky,
Who trips daintily down the mountain-side
Emptying her crystal chalice. . . .
And a red-bird, dipped in sunrise, cracks from a poplar's top
His exultant whip above a silver world.

Charles Erskine Scott Wood

[Born, 1852, at Erie, Pa. Now living in Portland, Ore.]

"WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN"[1]

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
O, it's then the time a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,
As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmusfere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days

[1] From the Biographical Edition of the Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley. Copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves as golden as the morn;
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermuns to us of the barns they growed to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover overhead!—
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the cellar-floor in red and yaller heaps;
And your cider-makin's over, and your wimmern-folks is through
With theyr mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and sausage too! . . .
I don't know how to tell it—but ef such a thing could be
As the angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on *me*—
I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

James Whitcomb Riley

[Born, 1853, at Greenfield, Ind.
Died, 1916, at Indianapolis, Ind.]

A PARTING GUEST[1]

What delightful hosts are they—
    Life and Love!
Lingeringly I turn away,
    This late hour, yet glad enough
They have not withheld from me
    Their high hospitality.
So, with face lit with delight
    And all gratitude, I stay
    Yet to press their hands and say,
"Thanks.—So fine a time! Good night."

James Whitcomb Riley [1853-1916]

DE FUST BANJO

Go 'way, fiddle! folks is tired o' hearin' you a-squawkin'.
Keep silence fur you' betters! don't you heah de banjo talkin'?
About de 'possum's tail she's gwine to lecter—ladies, listen!
About de ha'r whut isn't dar, an' why de ha'r is missin':

"Dar's gwine to be a' oberflow," said Noah, lookin' solemn—
Fur Noah tuk de "Herald," an' he read de ribber column—

[1] From the Biographical Edition of the Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley. Copyright, 1913. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

An' so he sot his hands to wuk a-clarin' timber-patches,
An' 'lowed he's gwine to build a boat to beat de steamah
Natchez.

Ol' Noah kep' a-nailin' an' a-chippin' an' a-sawin';
An' all de wicked neighbors kep' a-laughin' an' a-pshawin';
But Noah didn't min' 'em, knowin' whut was gwine to
happen:
An' forty days an' forty nights de rain it kep' a-drappin'.

Now, Noah had done cotched a lot ob ebry sort o' beas'es—
Ob all de shows a-trabbelin', it beat 'em all to pieces!
He had a Morgan colt an' sebral head o' Jarsey cattle—
An' druv 'em 'board de Ark as soon's he heered de thun-
der rattle.

Den sech anoder fall ob rain! It come so awful hebby,
De ribber riz immejitly, an' busted troo de lebbee;
De people all wuz drownded out—'cep Noah an' de crit-
ters,
An' men he'd hired to wuk de boat—an' one to mix de
bitters.

De Ark she kep' a-sailin' an' a-sailin' *an'* a-sailin';
De lion got his dander up, an' like to bruk de palin';
De sarpints hissed; de painters yelled; tel', whut wid all
de fussin',
You c'u'dn't hardly heah de mate a-bossin' 'roun' an'
cussin'.

Now Ham, de only nigger whut was runnin' on de packet,
Got lonesome in de barber-shop, an' c'u'dn't stan' de racket;
An' so, fur to amuse he-se'f, he steamed some wood an' bent it,
An' soon he had a banjo made—de fust dat wuz invented.

He wet de ledder, stretched it on; made bridge an' screws an' aprin;
An' fitted in a proper neck—'twuz berry long an' taprin';
He tuk some tin, an' twisted him a thimble fur to ring it:
An' den de mighty question riz: how wuz he gwine to string it?

De 'possum had as fine a tail as dis dat I's a-singin';
De har's so long an' thick an' strong,—des fit fur banjo-stringin';
Dat nigger shaved 'em off as short as washday-dinner graces:
An' sorted ob 'em by de size—f'om little E's to basses.

He strung her, tuned her, struck a jig,—'twuz *"Nebber min' de wedder,"*—
She soun' like forty-lebben bands a-playin' all togedder:
Some went to pattin'; some to dancin': Noah called de figgers;
An' Ham he sot an' knocked de tune, de happiest ob niggers!

Now, sence dat time—it's mighty strange—dere's not de
slightes' showin'
Ob any ha'r at all upon de 'possum's tail a-growin';
An' curi's, too, dat nigger's ways: his people nebber
los' 'em—
Fur whar you finds de nigger—dar's de banjo an' de
'possum!

Irwin Russell

[Born, 1853, at Port Gibson, Miss.
Died, 1879, at New Orleans, La.]

"IMMORTAL LOVE"

Immortal love, too high for my possessing,—
Yet, lower than thee, where shall I find repose?
Long in my youth I sang the morning rose,
By earthly things the heavenly pattern guessing!
Long fared I on, beauty and love caressing,
And finding in my heart a place for those
Eternal fugitives; the golden close
Of evening folds me, still their sweetness blessing.

Oh happy we, the first-born heirs of nature,
For whom the Heavenly Sun delays his light!
He by the sweets of every mortal creature
Tempers eternal beauty to our sight;
And by the glow upon love's earthly feature
Maketh the path of our departure bright.

George E. Woodberry

[Born, 1855, at Beverley, Mass.
Still living there and in New
York.]

BEHOLD THE DEEDS!

[A burlesque of the old ballads in the guise of a Chant Royal, the strictest and most difficult of the French forms. "Being," as Bunner has it, "the Plaint of Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, Salesman of Fancy Notions, held in durance of his Landlady for a failure to connect on Saturday Night."]

I would that all men my hard case would know,
How grievously I suffer for no sin:
I, Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, for lo!
I of my landlady am lockèd in
For being short on this sad Saturday,
Nor having shekels of silver wherewith to pay:
She turned and is departed with my key;
Wherefore, not even as other boarders free,
I sing, (as prisoners to their dungeon-stones
When for ten days they expiate a spree):
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

One night and one day have I wept my woe;
Nor wot I, when the morrow doth begin,
If I shall have to write to Briggs & Co.,
To pray them to advance the requisite tin
For ransom of their salesman, that he may
Go forth as other boarders go alway—
As those I hear now flocking from their tea,
Led by the daughter of my landlady
Piano-ward. This day, for all my moans,
Dry-bread and water have been servèd me.
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Miss Amabel Jones is musical, and so
The heart of the young he-boarder doth win,
Playing "The Maiden's Prayer" *adagio*—
That fetcheth him, as fetcheth the "bunko skin"
The innocent rustic. For my part, I pray
That Badarjewska maid may wait for aye
Ere sits she with a lover, as did we
Once sit together, Amabel! Can it be
That all that arduous wooing not atones
For Saturday's shortness of trade dollars three?
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Yea! She forgets the arm that was wont to go
Around her waist. She wears a buckle whose pin
Galleth the crook of her young man's elbow.
I forget not, for I that youth have been!
Smith was aforetime the Lothario gay.
Yet once, I mind me, Smith was forced to stay
Close in his room. Not calm as I was he;
But his noise brought no pleasaunce, verily.
Small ease he got of playing on the bones
Or hammering on the stove-pipe, that I see.
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Thou, for whose fear the figurative crow
I eat, accursed be thou and all thy kin!
Thee I will show up—yea, up I will show
Thy too-thick buckwheats and thy tea too thin.
Ay! here I dare thee, ready for the fray:
Thou dost *not* "keep a first-class house" I say!
It does not with the advertisements agree.

Thou lodgest a Briton with a puggaree,
And thou hast harbored Jacobses and Cohns,
Also a Mulligan. Thus denounce I thee!
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Envoy

Boarders! the worst I have not told to ye:
She hath stolen my trousers, that I may not flee
Privily by the window. Hence these groans.
There is no fleeing in a *robe de nuit.*
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

Henry Cuyler Bunner

[Born, 1855, at Oswego, N. Y.
Died, 1896, at Nutley, N. J.]

A PITCHER OF MIGNONETTE [1]

A pitcher of mignonette
In a tenement's highest casement,—
Queer sort of flower-pot—yet
That pitcher of mignonette
Is a garden in heaven set,
To the little sick child in the basement—
The pitcher of mignonette,
In a tenement's highest casement.

Henry Cuyler Bunner [1855-1896]

[1] Reprinted, by permission, from *Poems* by H. C. Bunner. Copyright, 1899, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

"FROST TO-NIGHT"

Apple-green west and an orange bar;
And the crystal eye of a lone, one star . . .
And, "Child, take the shears and cut what you will,
Frost to-night—so clear and dead-still."

Then I sally forth, half sad, half proud,
And I come to the velvet, imperial crowd,
The wine-red, the gold, the crimson, the pied,—
The dahlias that reign by the garden-side.

The dahlias I might not touch till to-night!
A gleam of shears in the fading light,
And I gathered them all,—the splendid throng,
And in one great sheaf I bore them along.

. . . . . .

In my garden of Life with its all late flowers
I heed a Voice in the shrinking hours:
"Frost to-night—so clear and dead-still" . . .
Half sad, half proud, my arms I fill.

Edith M. Thomas

[Born, 1854, at Chatham, Ohio. Now living on Staten Island.]

TEARS

When I consider Life and its few years—
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;

A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street,—
I wonder at the idleness of tears.
Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight,
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep,
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back what once he stayed to weep:
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

Lizette Woodworth Reese

[Born, 1856, near Baltimore, Md. Still living there.]

WISE

An apple orchard smells like wine;
A succory flower is blue;
Until Grief touched these eyes of mine,
Such things I never knew.

And now indeed I know so plain
Why one would like to cry
When spouts are full of April rain—
Such lonely folk go by!

So wise, so wise—that my tears fall
Each breaking of the dawn;
That I do long to tell you all—
But you are dead and gone.

Lizette Woodworth Reese [1856-]

BACCHUS

Listen to the tawny thief,
Hid beneath the waxen leaf,
Growling at his fairy host,
Bidding her with angry boast
Fill his cup with wine distilled
From the dew the dawn has spilled:
Stored away in golden casks
Is the precious draught he asks.

Who,—who makes this mimic din
In this mimic meadow inn,
Sings in such a drowsy note,
Wears a golden-belted coat;
Loiters in the dainty room
Of this tavern of perfume;
Dares to linger at the cup
Till the yellow sun is up?

Bacchus 'tis, come back again
To the busy haunts of men;
Garlanded and gaily dressed,
Bands of gold about his breast;
Straying from his paradise,
Having pinions angel-wise,—
'Tis the honey-bee, who goes
Reveling within a rose!

Frank Dempster Sherman [1860-1916]

A DAY FOR WANDERING

I set apart a day for wandering;
I heard the woodlands ring,
The hidden white-throat sing,
And the harmonic West,
Beyond a far hill-crest,
Touch its Aeolian string.
Remote from all the brawl and bruit of men,
The iron tongue of Trade,
I followed the clear calling of a wren
Deep to the bosom of a sheltered glade,
Where interwoven branches spread a shade
Of soft cool beryl like the evening seas
Unruffled by the breeze.
And there—and there—
I watched the maiden-hair,
The pale blue iris-grass,
The water-spider in its pause and pass
Upon a pool that like a mirror was.

I took for confidant
The diligent ant
Threading the clover and the sorrel aisles;
For me were all the smiles
Of the sequestered blossoms there abloom—
Chalice and crown and plume;
I drank the ripe rich attars blurred and blent,
And won—Content!

Clinton Scollard

[Born, 1860, at Clinton, N. Y., and living there at present.]

BLACK SHEEP

From their folded mates they wander far,
  Their ways seem harsh and wild;
They follow the beck of a baleful star,
  Their paths are dream-beguiled.

Yet haply they sought but a wider range,
  Some loftier mountain-slope,
And little recked of the country strange
  Beyond the gates of hope.

And haply a bell with a luring call
  Summoned their feet to tread
Midst the cruel rocks, where the deep pitfall
  And the lurking snare are spread.

Maybe, in spite of their tameless days
  Of outcast liberty,
They're sick at heart for the homely ways
  Where their gathered brothers be.

And oft at night, when the plains fall dark
  And the hills loom large and dim,
For the Shepherd's voice they mutely hark,
  And their souls go out to him.

Meanwhile, " Black sheep! Black sheep! " we cry,
  Safe in the inner fold;
And maybe they hear, and wonder why,
  And marvel, out in the cold.

Richard Burton

[Born, 1861, at Hartford, Conn. At present head of the English department of the University of Minnesota.]

A CONSERVATIVE

The garden beds I wandered by
  One bright and cheerful morn,
When I found a new-fledged butterfly,
  A-sitting on a thorn,
A black and crimson butterfly
  All doleful and forlorn.

I thought that life could have no sting
  To infant butterflies,
So I gazed on this unhappy thing
  With wonder and surprise.
While sadly with his waving wing
  He wiped his weeping eyes.

Said I, "What can the matter be?
  Why weepest thou so sore?
With garden fair and sunlight free
  And flowers in goodly store,"—
But he only turned away from me
  And burst into a roar.

Cried he, "My legs are thin and few
  Where once I had a swarm!
Soft fuzzy fur—a joy to view—
  Once kept my body warm,
Before these flapping wing-things grew,
  To hamper and deform!"

At that outrageous bug I shot
The fury of mine eye;
Said I, in scorn all burning hot,
In rage and anger high,
"You ignominious idiot!
Those wings are made to fly!"

"I do not want to fly," said he,
"I only want to squirm!"
And he drooped his wings dejectedly,
But still his voice was firm:
"I do not want to be a fly!
I want to be a worm!"

O yesterday of unknown lack
To-day of unknown bliss!
I left my fool in red and black;
The last I saw was this,—
The creature madly climbing back
Into his chrysalis.

Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman

[Born, 1860, at Hartford, Conn.
Now living in New York City.]

THE WILD RIDE

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

Let cowards and laggards fall back! But alert to the saddle
Weatherworn and abreast, go men of our galloping legion,
With a stirrup-cup each to the lily of women that loves him.

The trail is through dolor and dread, over crags and morasses;
There are shapes by the way, there are things that appal or entice us:
What odds? We are Knights of the Grail, we are vowed to the riding.

Thought's self is a vanishing wing, and joy is a cobweb,
And friendship a flower in the dust, and glory a sunbeam:
Not here is our prize, nor, alas! after these our pursuing.

A dipping of plumes, a tear, a shake of the bridle,
A passing salute to this world and her pitiful beauty;
We hurry with never a word in the track of our fathers.

I hear in my heart, I hear in its ominous pulses,
All day, on the road, the hoofs of invisible horses,
All night, from their stalls, the importunate pawing and neighing.

We spur to a land of no name, outracing the storm-wind;
We leap to the infinite dark like sparks from the anvil.
Thou leadest, O God! All's well with Thy troopers that follow.

Louise Imogen Guiney

[Born, 1861, at Boston, Mass. Now living near Oxford, England.]

A VAGABOND SONG

There is something in the autumn that is native to my blood—
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
To see the frosty asters like a smoke upon the hills.

There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;
We must rise and follow her,

When from every hill of flame
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

Bliss Carman

[Born, 1861, at Fredericton, N. B. Collaborator with Richard Hovey on the famous "Songs from Vagabondia." Now living at New Canaan, Ct.]

HEM AND HAW

Hem and Haw were the sons of sin,
Created to shally and shirk;
Hem lay 'round and Haw looked on
While God did all the work.

Hem was a fogy, and Haw was a prig,
For both had the dull, dull mind;
And whenever they found a thing to do,
They yammered and went it blind.

Hem was the father of bigots and bores;
As the sands of the sea were they.
And Haw was the father of all the tribe
Who criticize to-day.

But God was an artist from the first,
And knew what he was about;
While over his shoulder sneered these two,
And advised him to rub it out.

They prophesied ruin ere man was made;
"Such folly must surely fail!"
And when he was done, "Do you think, my Lord,
He's better without a tail?"

And still in the honest working world,
With posture and hint and smirk,
These sons of the devil are standing by
While man does all the work.

They balk endeavor and baffle reform,
In the sacred name of law;
And over the quavering voice of Hem
Is the droning voice of Haw.

Bliss Carman [1861-]

DAISIES

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their singing was, "Earth, it is well!"
And all of their dancing was, "Life, thou art good!"

Bliss Carman [1861-]

THE LITTLE ELF

I met a little Elf-man, once,
Down where the lilies blow.
I asked him why he was so small,
And why he didn't grow.

He slightly frowned, and with his eye
He looked me through and through.
"I'm quite as big for me," said he,
"As you are big for you."

John Kendrick Bangs

[Born, 1862, at Yonkers, N. Y. Now living at Ogonquit, Maine.]

THE ELF AND THE DORMOUSE

Under a toadstool crept a wee Elf,
Out of the rain to shelter himself.

Under the toadstool, sound asleep,
Sat a big Dormouse all in a heap.

Trembled the wee Elf, frightened and yet
Fearing to fly away lest he get wet.

To the next shelter—maybe a mile!
Sudden the wee Elf smiled a wee smile.

Tugged till the toadstool toppled in two.
Holding it over him, gaily he flew.

Soon he was safe home, dry as could be.
Soon woke the Dormouse—"Good gracious me!

"Where is my toadstool?" loud he lamented.
—And that's how umbrellas first were invented.

Oliver Herford

[Born, 1863, in England. Moved to America about 1892. Now living in Lakewood, N. J., and New York City.]

JAPANESQUE [1]

Oh, where the white quince blossom swings
I love to take my Japan ease!
I love the maid Anise who clings
So lightly on my Japan knees;
I love the little song she sings,
The little love-song Japanese.
I *almost* love the lute's *tink-tunkle*
Played by that charming Jap Anise—
For am I not her old Jap uncle?
And is she not my Japan niece?

Oliver Herford [1863-]

AT THE CROSSROADS

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever—
And it well may be for a day and a night,
And it well may be forever.
But whether we meet or whether we part
(For our ways are past our knowing),
A pledge from the heart to its fellow heart
On the ways we all are going!
Here's luck!
For we know not where we are going.

[1] Reprinted from *The Bashful Earthquake* by Oliver Herford. Copyright, 1898, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Whether we win or whether we lose
With the hands that life is dealing,
It is not we nor the ways we choose
But the fall of the cards that's sealing.
There's a fate in love and a fate in fight,
And the best of us all go under—
And whether we're wrong or whether we're
right,
We win, sometimes, to our wonder.
Here's luck!
That we may not yet go under!

With a steady swing and an open brow
We have tramped the ways together,
But we're clasping hands at the crossroads now
In the Fiend's own night for weather;
And whether we bleed or whether we smile
In the leagues that lie before us
The ways of life are many a mile
And the dark of Fate is o'er us.
Here's luck!
And a cheer for the dark before us!

You to the left and I to the right,
For the ways of men must sever,
And it well may be for a day and a night
And it well may be forever!
But whether we live or whether we die
(For the end is past our knowing),
Here's two frank hearts and the open sky,
Be a fair or an ill wind blowing!

Here's luck!
In the teeth of all winds blowing.

Richard Hovey

[Born, 1864, at Normal, Ill. Died, 1900. His buoyant rhythms brought a fresh virility to American poetry; his most characteristic verses may be found in "Songs from Vagabondia" (in collaboration with Bliss Carman) and "More Songs from Vagabondia."]

A STEIN SONG

(*From "Spring"*)

Give a rouse, then, in the Maytime
For a life that knows no fear!
Turn night-time into daytime
With the sunlight of good cheer!
For it's always fair weather
When good fellows get together,
With a stein on the table and a good song ringing clear.

When the wind comes up from Cuba,
And the birds are on the wing,
And our hearts are patting juba
To the banjo of the spring,
Then it's no wonder whether
The boys will get together,
With a stein on the table and a cheer for everything.

For we're all frank-and-twenty
When the spring is in the air;
And we've faith and hope a-plenty,
And we've life and love to spare;

And it's birds of a feather
When we all get together,
With a stein on the table and a heart without a care.

For we know the world is glorious,
And the goal a golden thing,
And that God is not censorious
When his children have their fling;
And life slips its tether
When the boys get together,
With a stein on the table in the fellowship of spring.

Richard Hovey [1864-1900]

UNMANIFEST DESTINY

To what new fates, my country, far
And unforeseen of foe or friend,
Beneath what unexpected star
Compelled to what unchosen end.

Across the sea that knows no beach,
The Admiral of Nations guides
Thy blind obedient keels to reach
The harbor where thy future rides!

The guns that spoke at Lexington
Knew not that God was planning then
The trumpet word of Jefferson
To bugle forth the rights of men.

To them that wept and cursed Bull Run,
What was it but despair and shame?
Who saw behind the cloud the sun?
Who knew that God was in the flame?

Had not defeat upon defeat,
Disaster on disaster come,
The slave's emancipated feet
Had never marched behind the drum.

There is a Hand that bends our deeds
To mightier issues than we planned;
Each son that triumphs, each that bleeds,
My country, serves It's dark command.

I do not know beneath what sky
Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
I only know it shall be great.

Richard Hovey [1864-1900]

DESERTED

The old house leans upon a tree
Like some old man upon a staff:
The night wind in its ancient porch
Sounds like a hollow laugh.

The heaven is wrapped in flying clouds,
As grandeur cloaks itself in gray:
The starlight flitting in and out,
Glints like a lanthorn ray.

The dark is full of whispers. Now
A fox-hound howls: and through the night,
Like some old ghost from out its grave,
The moon comes, misty white.

Madison Cawein
[Born, 1865, at Louisville, Ky.
Died there in 1914.]

THE MAN HUNT[1]

The woods stretch wild to the mountain side,
And the brush is deep where a man may hide.

They have brought the bloodhounds up again
To the roadside rock where they found the slain.

They have brought the bloodhounds up, and they
Have taken the trail to the mountain way.

Three times they circled the trail and crossed,
And thrice they found it and thrice they lost.

Now straight through the pines and the underbrush
They follow the scent through the forest's hush.

And their deep-mouthed bay is a pulse of fear
In the heart of the wood that the man must hear.

The man who crouches among the trees
From the stern-faced men that follow these.

A huddle of rocks that the ooze has mossed—
And the trail of the hunted again is lost.

[1] Taken by permission from *The Vale of Tempe* by Madison Cawein. Copyright, 1905, by E. P. Dutton and Co., New York.

An upturned pebble; a bit of ground
A heel has trampled—the trail is found.

And the woods re-echo the bloodhounds' bay
As again they take to the mountain way.

A rock; a ribbon of road; a ledge,
With a pine-tree clutching its crumbling edge.

A pine, that the lightning long since clave,
Whose huge roots hollow a ragged cave.

A shout; a curse; and a face aghast,
And the human quarry is laired at last.

The human quarry, with clay-clogged hair
And eyes of terror, who waits them there;

That glares and crouches and rising then
Hurls clods and curses at dogs and men.

Until the blow of a gun-butt lays
Him stunned and bleeding upon his face.

A rope, a prayer, and an oak-tree near.
And a score of hands to swing him clear.

A grim black thing for the setting sun
And the moon and the stars to look upon.

Madison Cawein [1865-1914]

AUGUST MOONLIGHT

The solemn light behind the barns,
  The rising moon, the cricket's call,
The August night, and you and I—
  What is the meaning of it all!

Has it a meaning, after all?
  Or is it one of Nature's lies,
That net of beauty that she casts
  Over Life's unsuspecting eyes?

That web of beauty that she weaves
  For one strange purpose of her own,—
For this the painted butterfly,
  For this the rose—for this alone!

Strange repetition of the rose,
  And strange reiterated call
Of bird and insect, man and maid,—
  Is that the meaning of it all?

If it means nothing after all!
  And nothing lives except to die—
It is enough—that solemn light
  Behind the barns, and you and I.

Richard Le Gallienne

[Born, 1866, in Liverpool, England. Moved to America about 1900. Now living at Rowayton, Conn.]

THE PURPLE COW [1]

(Reflections on a Mythic Beast
Who's Quite Remarkable, at Least.)

I never saw a Purple Cow;
I never hope to See One;
But I can Tell you, Anyhow,
I'd rather See than Be One.

Gelett Burgess

[Born, 1866, at Boston, Mass. Creator, both as rhymer and draughtsman, of the Goops and several books of delightful, pure nonsense. Now living in New York City.]

ON DIGITAL EXTREMITIES [1]

A Poem, and a Gem it Is!

I'd rather have Fingers than Toes;
I'd rather have Ears than a Nose;
And as for my Hair,
I'm Glad it's All There;
I'll be Awfully Sad when it Goes!

Gelett Burgess [1866-]

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Frederick A. Stokes Company, from *The Burgess Nonsense Book* by Gelett Burgess. Copyright, 1901, by Gelett Burgess.

PSYCHOLOPHON: *Supposed to Be Translated from the Old Parsee* [1]

Twine then the rays
  Round her soft Theban tissues.
All will be as She says,
  When the dead Past reissues.
Matters not what nor where,
  Hark, to the moon's dim cluster!
How was her heavy hair
  Lithe as a feather-duster!
Matters not when nor whence;
  Flittertigibbet!
Sound make the song, not sense,
  Thus I inhibit!

Gelett Burgess [1866-]

CANOPUS

When quacks with pills political would dope us,
  When politics absorbs the livelong day,
I like to think about that star Canopus,
  So far, so far away.

Greatest of visioned suns, they say who list 'em;
  To weigh it science almost must despair.
Its shell would hold our whole dinged solar system,
  Nor even know 'twas there.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Frederick A. Stokes Company, from *The Burgess Nonsense Book* by Gelett Burgess. Copyright, 1901, by Gelett Burgess.

When temporary chairmen utter speeches,
And frenzied henchmen howl their battle hymns,
My thoughts float out across the cosmic reaches
To where Canopus swims.

When men are calling names and making faces,
And all the world's ajangle and ajar,
I meditate on interstellar spaces
And smoke a mild seegar.

For after one has had about a week of
The argument of friends as well as foes,
A star that has no parallax to speak of
Conduces to repose.

Bert Leston Taylor

[Born, 1866, at Goshen, Mass. Has conducted a column of verse and prose in the *Chicago Tribune* for many years. Living in Chicago, Ill.]

ON A SOLDIER FALLEN IN THE PHILIPPINES

Streets of the roaring town,
Hush for him; hush, be still!
He comes, who was stricken down
Doing the word of our will.
Hush! Let him have his state.
Give him his soldier's crown,
The grists of trade can wait
Their grinding at the mill.
But he cannot wait for his honor, now the trumpet has been blown.
Wreathe pride now for his granite brow, lay love on his breast of stone.

Toll! Let the great bells toll
Till the clashing air is dim,
Did we wrong this parted soul?
We will make it up to him.
Toll! Let him never guess
What work we sent him to.
Laurel, laurel, yes.
He did what we bade him do.
Praise, and never a whispered hint but the fight he fought was good;
Never a word that the blood on his sword was his country's own heart's-blood.

A flag for a soldier's bier
Who dies that his land may live;
O banners, banners here,
That he doubt not nor misgive!
That he heed not from the tomb
The evil days draw near
When the nation robed in gloom
With its faithless past shall strive.
Let him never dream that his bullet's scream went wide of its island mark,
Home to the heart of his darling land where she stumbled and sinned in the dark.

William Vaughn Moody

[Born, 1869, at Spencer, Ind.
Died, 1910, at Colorado Springs.]

LUCINDA MATLOCK[1]

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
And played snap-out at Winchester.
One time we changed partners,
Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
And then I found Davis.
We were married and lived together for seventy years,
Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
Eight of whom we lost
Ere I had reached the age of sixty.
I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
I made the garden, and for holiday
Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
And many a flower and medicinal weed—
Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.
At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
And passed to a sweet repose.
What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
Degenerate sons and daughters,
Life is too strong for you—
It takes life to love Life.

Edgar Lee Masters

[Born, 1869, at Garnett, Kansas. Has written several volumes before and since *Spoon River Anthology*, which is his most famous. Living in Chicago, Ill.]

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters.

ANNE RUTLEDGE *

Out of me unworthy and unknown
The vibrations of deathless music;
"With malice toward none, with charity for all."
Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,
And the beneficent face of a nation
Shining with justice and truth.
I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic,
From the dust of my bosom!

Edgar Lee Masters [1869-]

SILENCE [1]

I have known the silence of the stars and of the sea,
And the silence of the city when it pauses,
And the silence of a man and a maid,
And the silence for which music alone finds the word,
And the silence of the woods before the winds of spring begin,
And the silence of the sick

* See pages 10, 50, 108, 119, 123, 144.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Songs and Satires* by Edgar Lee Masters.

When their eyes roam about the room.
And I ask: For the depths
Of what use is language?
A beast of the field moans a few times
When death takes its young.
And we are voiceless in the presence of realities—
We cannot speak.

A curious boy asks an old soldier
Sitting in front of the grocery store,
"How did you lose your leg?"
And the old soldier is struck with silence,
Or his mind flies away
Because he cannot concentrate it on Gettysburg.
It comes back jocosely
And he says, "A bear bit it off."
And the boy wonders, while the old soldier
Dumbly, feebly lives over
The flashes of guns, the thunder of cannon,
The shrieks of the slain,
And himself lying on the ground,
And the hospital surgeons, the knives,
And the long days in bed.
But if he could describe it all
He would be an artist.
But if he were an artist there would be deeper wounds
Which he could not describe.

There is the silence of a great hatred,
And the silence of a great love,
And the silence of a deep peace of mind,

And the silence of an embittered friendship,
There is the silence of a spiritual crisis,
Through which your soul, exquisitely tortured,
Comes with visions not to be uttered
Into a realm of higher life.
And the silence of the gods who understand each other
without speech,
There is the silence of defeat.
There is the silence of those unjustly punished;
And the silence of the dying whose hand
Suddenly grips yours.
There is the silence between father and son,
When the father cannot explain his life,
Even though he be misunderstood for it.

There is the silence that comes between husband and
wife.
There is the silence of those who have failed;
And the vast silence that covers
Broken nations and vanquished leaders.
There is the silence of Lincoln,
Thinking of the poverty of his youth.
And the silence of Napoleon
After Waterloo.
And the silence of Jeanne d'Arc
Saying amid the flames, "Blesséd Jesus"—
Revealing in two words all sorrow, all hope.
And there is the silence of age,
Too full of wisdom for the tongue to utter it
In words intelligible to those who have not lived
The great range of life.

And there is the silence of the dead.
If we who are in life cannot speak
Of profound experiences,
Why do you marvel that the dead
Do not tell you of death?
Their silence shall be interpreted
As we approach them.

Edgar Lee Masters [1869-]

THE MASTER *[1]

[Lincoln as seen presumably by one of his contemporaries. Supposed to have been written shortly after the Civil War.]

A flying word from here and there
Had sown the name at which we sneered,
But soon the name was everywhere,
To be reviled and then revered:
A presence to be loved and feared,
We cannot hide it, or deny
That we, the gentlemen who jeered,
May be forgotten by and by.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;
And having made his note of us,
He pondered and was reconciled.

* See pages 10, 47, 108, 119, 123, 144.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Town down the River* by E. A. Robinson.

Was ever master yet so mild
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled,
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that undeceiving fate
Would shame us whom he served unsought;
He knew that he must wince and wait—
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through,
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.
And what appears if we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?
It is the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feels
Again the venom that we flung,
Transfigured to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.
Shrewd, hallowed, harassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was never young,
Nor could it ever have been old.

For he, to whom we have applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
As he was ancient at his birth:
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met rancor with a cryptic mirth,
Laconic—and Olympian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone;
The calm, the smouldering, and the flame
Of awful patience were his own:
With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-shadowings,
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inept Icarian wings.

For we were not as other men:
'Twas ours to soar and his to see.
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree
On what it is to be sublime,
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

[Born, 1869, at Head Tide, Maine.
Now living in Brooklyn, N. Y.]

RICHARD CORY[1]

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Edwin Arlington Robinson [1869-]

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Children of the Night.*

AN OLD STORY[1]

Strange that I did not know him then,
That friend of mine!
I did not even show him then
One friendly sign;

But cursed him for the ways he had
To make me see
My envy of the praise he had
For praising me.

I would have rid the earth of him
Once, in my pride! . . .
I never knew the worth of him
Until he died.

Edwin Arlington Robinson [1869-

THE BLACK VULTURE

Aloof upon the day's immeasured dome,
He holds unshared the silence of the sky.
Far down his bleak, relentless eyes descry
The eagle's empire and the falcon's home—
Far down, the galleons of sunset roam;
His hazards on the sea of morning lie;
Serene, he hears the broken tempest sigh
Where cold sierras gleam like scattered foam.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from *The Children of the Night.*

And least of all he holds the human swarm—
Unwitting now that envious men prepare
To make their dream and its fulfillment one,
When, poised above the caldrons of the storm,
Their hearts, contemptuous of death, shall dare
His roads between the thunder and the sun.

George Sterling

[Born, 1869, at Sag Harbor, N. Y. Now living at San Francisco, Cal.]

A PENITENTIAL WEEK

The week had gloomily begun
For Willie Weeks, a poor man's
SUN.

He was beset with bill and dun,
And he had very little
MON.

"This cash," said he, "won't pay my dues,
I've nothing here but ones and
TUES."

A bright thought struck him, and he said:
"The rich Miss Goldrocks I will
WED."

But when he paid his court to her,
She lisped, but firmly said: "No,
THUR."

"Alas," said he, "then I must die!
Although hereafter I may
FRI."

They found his gloves, and coat, and hat;
The Coroner upon them
SAT.

Carolyn Wells

[Born, 1869, at Rahway, N. J.
Now living in New York City.]

THE SPELLING LESSON

When Venus said: "Spell no for me,"
"N-O," Dan Cupid wrote with glee,
And smiled at his success;
"Ah, child," said Venus, laughing low,
"We women do not spell it so,
We spell it Y-E-S."

Carolyn Wells [1869-]

STRICTLY GERM-PROOF

The Antiseptic Baby and the Prophylactic Pup
Were playing in the garden when the Bunny gamboled up;
They looked upon the Creature with a loathing undisguised;—
It wasn't Disinfected and it wasn't Sterilized.

They said it was a Microbe and a Hotbed of Disease;
They steamed it in a vapor of a thousand-odd degrees;
They froze it in a freezer that was cold as Banished Hope
And washed it in permanganate with carbolated soap.

In sulphurated hydrogen they steeped its wiggly ears;
They trimmed its frisky whiskers with a pair of hard-boiled shears;
They donned their rubber mittens and they took it by the hand
And elected it a member of the Fumigated Band.

There's not a Micrococcus in the garden where they play;
They bathe in pure iodoform a dozen times a day;
And each imbibes his rations from a Hygienic Cup—
The Bunny and the Baby and the Prophylactic Pup.

Arthur Guiterman

[Born, 1871, in Vienna, Austria, of American parents. Now living in New York City.]

MIA CARLOTTA

Giuseppe, da barber, ees greata for "mash,"
He gotta da bigga, da blacka mustache,
Good clo'es an' good styla an' playnta good cash.

W'enevra Giuseppe ees walk on da street,
Da peopla dey talka, "how nobby! how neat!
How softa da handa, how smalla da feet."

He raisa hees hat an' he shaka hees curls,
An' smila weeth teetha so shiny like pearls;
O! many da heart of da seelly young girls
He gotta.
Yes, playnta he gotta—
But notta
Carlotta!

Giuseppe, da barber, he maka da eye,
An' lika da steam engine puffa an' sigh,
For catcha Carlotta w'en she ees go by.

Carlotta she walka weeth nose in da air,
An' look through Giuseppe weeth far-away stare,
As eef she no see dere ees som'body dere.

Giuseppe, da barber, he gotta da cash,
He gotta da clo'es an' da bigga mustache,
He gotta da seely young girls for da "mash,"
But notta—
You bat my life, notta—
Carlotta.
I gotta!

T. A. Daly

[Born, 1871, at Philadelphia, Pa. Has written several books in various dialects and "straight" English, although he is best known for his Italian-American interpretations. Living in Germantown, Pa.]

BETWEEN TWO LOVES

I gotta lov' for Angela,
    I lov' Carlotta, too.
I no can marry both o' dem,
    So w'at I gona do?

O! Angela ees pretta girl,
She gotta hair so black, so curl,
An' teeth so white as anytheeng.
An' O! she gotta voice to seeng,
Dat mak' your hearta feel eet must
Jump up an' dance or eet weell bust.
An' alla time she seeng, her eyes
Dey smila like Italia's skies,
An' makin' flirtin' looks at you—
But dat ees all w'at she can do.

Carlotta ees no gotta song,
But she ees twice so big an' strong
As Angela, an' she no look
So beautiful—but she can cook.
You oughta see her carry wood!
I tal you w'at, eet do you good.
When she ees be som'body's wife
She worka hard, you bat my life!
She never gattin' tired, too—
But dat ees all w'at she can do.

O! my! I weesh dat Angela
Was strong for carry wood,
Or else Carlotta gotta song
An' looka pretta good.
I gotta lov' for Angela,
I lov' Carlotta, too.
I no can marry both o' dem,
So w'at I gona do?

T. A. Daly [1871-]

DISCOVERED [1]

Seen you down at chu'ch las' night,
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
What I mean? Oh, dat's all right,
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
You was sma't ez sma't could be,
But you couldn't hide f'om me.
Ain't I got two eyes to see!
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Guess you thought you's awful keen;
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Evahthing you done, I seen;
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Seen him tek yo' ahm jes' so,
When he got outside de do'—
Oh, I know dat man's yo' beau!
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

[1] From *Lyrics of Lowly Life.* Copyright, 1896, by Dodd, Mead & Company.

Say now, honey, wha'd he say?—
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Keep yo' secrets—dat's yo' way—
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.
Won't tell me an' I'm yo' pal!
I'm gwine tell his othah gal,—
Know huh, too, huh name is Sal.
Nevah min', Miss Lucy.

Paul Laurence Dunbar

[Born, 1872, at Dayton, Ohio, the son of two negro slaves. He was, before and after he wrote his interpretative poetry, an elevator-boy. Many of his verses are in "literary English," but his most characteristic work is in the rich negro dialect. He died, 1906, in Washington.]

A COQUETTE CONQUERED[1]

Yes, my ha't's ez ha'd ez stone—
Go 'way, Sam, an' lemme 'lone.
No; I ain't gwine change my min';
Ain't gwine ma'y you—nuffin' de kin'.

Phiny loves you true an' deah?
Go ma'y Phiny; whut I keer?
Oh, you needn't mou'n an' cry—
I don't keer how soon you die.

Got a present! Whut you got?
Somef'n fu' de pan er pot!
Huh! Yo' sass do sholy beat—
Think I don't git 'nough to eat?

[1] From *Lyrics of Lowly Life.* Copyright, 1896, by Dodd, Mead & Company.

Whut's dat un'neaf yo' coat?
Looks des lak a little shoat.
'Tain't no possum? Bless de Lamb!
Yes, it is, you rascal, Sam!

Gin it to me; whut you say?
Ain't you sma't now! Oh, go 'way!
Possum do look mighty nice;
But you ax too big a price.

Tell me, is you talkin' true,
Dat's de gal's whut ma'ies you?
Come back, Sam; now whah's you gwine?
Co'se you knows dat possum's mine!

Paul Laurence Dunbar [1872-1906]

HOW JACK FOUND THAT BEANS MAY GO BACK ON A CHAP

Without the slightest basis
For hypochondriasis
A widow had forebodings
which a cloud around her flung,
And with expression cynical
For half the day a clinical
Thermometer she held
beneath her tongue.

Whene'er she read the papers
She suffered from the vapors,
At every tale of malady
or accident she'd groan;

In every new and smart disease,
From housemaid's knee to heart disease,
She recognized the symptoms
as her own!

She had a yearning chronic
To try each novel tonic,
Elixir, panacea, lotion,
opiate, and balm;
And from a homeopathist
Would change to an hydropathist,
And back again,
with stupefying calm!

She was nervous, cataleptic,
And anemic, and dyspeptic:
Though not convinced of apoplexy,
yet she had her fears.
She dwelt with force fanatical
Upon a twinge rheumatical,
And said she had a
buzzing in her ears!

Now all of this bemoaning
And this grumbling and this groaning
The mind of Jack, her son and heir,
unconscionably bored.
His heart completely hardening,
He gave his time to gardening,
For raising beans was
something he adored.

Each hour in accents morbid
This limp maternal bore bid
  Her callous son affectionate
    and lachrymose good-bys.
She never granted Jack a day
Without some long "Alackaday!"
  Accompanied by
    rolling of the eyes.

But Jack, no panic showing,
Just watched his beanstalk growing,
  And twined with tender fingers
    the tendrils up the pole.
At all her words funereal
He smiled a smile ethereal,
  Or sighed an absent-minded
    "Bless my soul!"

That hollow-hearted creature
Would never change a feature:
  No tear bedimmed his eye, however
    touching was her talk.
She never fussed or flurried him,
The only thing that worried him
  Was when no bean-pods
    grew upon the stalk!

But then he wabbled loosely
His head, and wept profusely,
  And, taking out his handkerchief
    to mop away his tears,

Exclaimed: "It hasn't got any!"
He found this blow to botany
Was sadder than were all
his mother's fears.

The Moral is that gardeners pine
Whene'er no pods adorn the vine.
Of all sad words experience gleans
The saddest are: "It *might* have beans."
(I did not make this up myself:
'Twas in a book upon my shelf.
It's witty, but I don't deny
It's rather Whittier than I!)

Guy Wetmore Carryl

[The son of Charles E. Carryl (see page 4), he inherited his father's great gifts and became the most brilliant versifier we have produced. Although he wrote several serious poems, his most characteristic work is to be found in his burlesques of the old nursery rhymes ("Mother Goose for Grownups"), the parables of Æsop ("Fables for the Frivolous") and his perversions of the ancient fairy-tales ("Grimm Tales Made Gay")—all with a highly diverting Moral attached. He was born, 1873, in New York City and died in 1904.]

HOW A CAT WAS ANNOYED AND A POET WAS BOOTED

A poet had a cat.
There is nothing odd in that—
(I *might* make a little pun about the *Mews!*)
But what is really more
Remarkable, she wore
A pair of pointed patent-leather shoes.

And I doubt me greatly whether
E'er you heard the like of that:
Pointed shoes of patent-leather
On a cat!

His time he used to pass
Writing sonnets, on the grass—
(I *might* say something good on *pen* and *sward!*)
While the cat sat near at hand,
Trying hard to understand
The poems he occasionally roared.
(I myself possess a feline,
But when poetry I roar
He is sure to make a bee-line
For the door.)

The poet, cent by cent,
All his patrimony spent—
(I *might* tell how he went from *verse* to *werse!*)
Till the cat was sure she could,
By advising, do him good.
So addressed him in a manner that was terse:
"We are bound toward the scuppers,
And the time has come to act,
Or we'll both be on our uppers
For a fact!"

On her boot she fixed her eye,
But the boot made no reply—
(I *might* say: "Couldn't speak to save its *sole!*")

And the foolish bard, instead
Of responding, only read
A verse that wasn't bad upon the whole.
And it pleased the cat so greatly,
Though she knew not what it meant,
That I'll quote approximately
How it went:—

"If I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree"—
(I *might* put in: "I think I'd just as *leaf!*")
"Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough"—
Well, he'd plagiarized it bodily, in brief!
But that cat of simple breeding
Couldn't read the lines between,
So she took it to a leading
Magazine.

She was jarred and very sore
When they showed her to the door.
(I *might* hit off the *door* that was a *jar!*)
To the spot she swift returned
Where the poet sighed and yearned,
And she told him that he'd gone a little far.
"Your performance with this rhyme has
Made me absolutely sick,"
She remarked. "I think the time has
Come to kick!"

I could fill up half the page
With descriptions of her rage—

(I *might* say that she went a bit *too fur!*)
When he smiled and murmured: "Shoo!"
"There is one thing I can do!"
She answered with a wrathful kind of purr.
"You may shoo me, and it suit you,
But I feel my conscience bid
Me, as tit for tat, to boot you!"
(Which she did.)

The Moral of the plot
(Though I say it, as should not!)
Is: An editor is difficult to suit.
But again there're other times
When the man who fashions rhymes
Is a rascal, and a bully one to boot!

Guy Wetmore Carryl [1873-1904]

FREE FANTASIA ON JAPANESE THEMES[1]

All the afternoon there has been a chirping of birds,
And the sun lies warm and still on the western sides of
swollen branches.
There is no wind;
Even the little twigs at the ends of the branches do not
move,
And the needles of the pines are solid
Bands of inarticulated blackness
Against the blue-white sky.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Pictures of the Floating World* by Amy Lowell.

Still, but alert;
And my heart is still and alert,
Passive with sunshine,
Avid of adventure.

I would experience new emotions,
Submit to strange enchantments,
Bend to influences
Bizarre, exotic,
Fresh with burgeoning.

I would climb a sacred mountain,
Struggle with other pilgrims up a steep path through
pine-trees,
Above to the smooth, treeless slopes,
And prostrate myself before a painted shrine,
Beating my hands upon the hot earth,
Quieting my eyes upon the distant sparkle
Of the faint spring sea.

I would recline upon a balcony
In purple curving folds of silk,
And my dress should be silvered with a pattern
Of butterflies and swallows,
And the black band of my *obi*
Should flash with gold circular threads,
And glitter when I moved.
I would lean against the railing
While you sang to me of wars
Past and to come—
Sang, and played the samisen.

Perhaps I would beat a little hand drum
In time to your singing;
Perhaps I would only watch the play of light
Upon the hilt of your two swords.

I would sit in a covered boat,
Rocking slowly to the narrow waves of a river,
While above us, an arc of moving lanterns,
Curved a bridge,
A hiss of gold
Blooming out of darkness,
Rockets exploded,
And died in a soft dripping of colored stars.
We would float between the high trestles,
And drift away from other boats,
Until the rockets flared soundless,
And their falling stars hung silent in the sky,
Like wistaria clusters above the ancient entrance of a temple.

I would anything
Rather than this cold paper;
With outside, the quiet sun on the sides of burgeoning branches,
And inside, only my books.

Amy Lowell

[Born, 1874, at Brookline, Mass. Still living there.]

MADONNA OF THE EVENING FLOWERS[1]

All day long I have been working
Now I am tired.
I call: "Where are you?"
But there is only the oak tree rustling in the wind.
The house is very quiet,
The sun shines in on your books,
On your scissors and thimble just put down,
But you are not there.
Suddenly I am lonely:
Where are you?
I go about searching.

Then I see you,
Standing under a spire of pale blue larkspur,
With a basket of roses on your arm.
You are cool, like silver,
And you smile.
I think the Canterbury bells are playing little tunes,
You tell me that the peonies need spraying,
That the columbines have overrun all bounds,
That the pyrus japonica should be cut back and
rounded.
You tell me these things.
But I look at you, heart of silver,
White heart-flame of polished silver,

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Pictures of the Floating World* by Amy Lowell.

Burning beneath the blue steeples of the larkspur,
And I long to kneel instantly at your feet,
While all about us peal the loud, sweet *Te Deums*
of the Canterbury bells.

Amy Lowell [1874-]

TWO LACQUER PRINTS

The Emperor's Garden

Once, in the sultry heat of midsummer,
An Emperor caused the miniature mountains in
his garden
To be covered with white silk,
That so crowned,
They might cool his eyes
With the sparkle of snow.

Meditation

A wise man,
Watching the stars pass across the sky,
Remarked:
In the upper air the fireflies move more slowly.

Amy Lowell [1874-]

SPINNING IN APRIL

Moon in heaven's garden, among the clouds that wander,
Crescent moon so young to see, above the April ways,
Whiten, bloom not yet, not yet, within the twilight yonder;
All my spinning is not done, for all the loitering days.

Oh, my heart has two wild wings that ever would be flying!
Oh, my heart's a meadow-lark that ever would be free!
Well it is that I must spin until the light is dying;
Well it is the little wheel must turn all day for me!

All the hill-tops beckon, and beyond the western meadows
Something calls for ever, calls me ever, low and clear:
A little tree as young as I, the coming summer shadows,—
The voice of running waters that I always thirst to hear.

Oftentime the plea of it has set my wings a-beating;
Oftentime it coaxes, as I sit weary-wise,
Till the wild life hastens out to wild things all entreating,
And leaves me at the spinning-wheel with dark, unseeing eyes.

Josephine Preston Peabody

[Born, 1874, in New York City. Now living at Cambridge, Mass.]

THE MONK IN THE KITCHEN

I

Order is a lovely thing;
On disarray it lays its wing,
Teaching simplicity to sing.
It has a meek and lowly grace,
Quiet as a nun's face.
Lo—I will have thee in this place!
Tranquil well of deep delight,
All things that shine through thee appear
As stones through water, sweetly clear.
Thou clarity,
That with angelic charity
Revealest beauty where thou art,
Spread thyself like a clean pool.
Then all the things that in thee are,
Shall seem more spiritual and fair,
Reflection from serener air—
Sunken shapes of many a star
In the high heavens set afar.

II

Ye stolid, homely, visible things,
Above you all brood glorious wings
Of your deep entities, set high,
Like slow moons in a hidden sky.

But you, their likenesses, are spent
Upon another element.
Truly ye are but seemings—
The shadowy cast-off gleamings
Of bright solidities. Ye seem
Soft as water, vague as dream;
Image, cast in a shifting stream.

III

What are ye?
I know not.
Brazen pan and iron pot,
Yellow brick and gray flag-stone
That my feet have trod upon—
Ye seem to me
Vessels of bright mystery.
For ye do bear a shape, and so
Though ye were made by man, I know
An inner Spirit also made,
And ye his breathings have obeyed.

IV

Shape, the strong and awful Spirit,
Laid his ancient hand on you.
He waste chaos doth inherit;
He can alter and subdue.
Verily, he doth lift up
Matter, like a sacred cup.

Into deep substance he reached, and lo
Where ye were not, ye were; and so
Out of useless nothing, ye
Groaned and laughed and came to be.
And I use you, as I can,
Wonderful uses, made for man,
Iron pot and brazen pan.

V

What are ye?
I know not;
Nor what I really do
When I move and govern you.
There is no small work unto God.
He required of us greatness;
Of his least creature
A high angelic nature,
Stature superb and bright completeness.
He sets to us no humble duty.
Each act that he would have us do
Is haloed round with strangest beauty;
Terrific deeds and cosmic tasks
Of his plainest child he asks.
When I polish the brazen pan
I hear a creature laugh afar
In the gardens of a star,
And from his burning presence run
Flaming wheels of many a sun.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.

When I cleanse this earthen floor
My spirit leaps to see
Bright garments trailing over it,
A cleanness made by me.
Purger of all men's thoughts and ways,
With labor do I sound Thy praise,
My work is done for Thee.
Whoever makes a thing more bright,
He is an angel of all light.
Therefore let me spread abroad
The beautiful cleanness of my God.

VI

One time in the cool of dawn
Angels came and worked with me.
The air was soft with many a wing.
They laughed amid my solitude
And cast bright looks on everything.
Sweetly of me did they ask
That they might do my common task
And all were beautiful—but one
With garments whiter than the sun
Had such a face
Of deep, remembered grace;
That when I saw I cried—"Thou art
The great Blood-Brother of my heart.
Where have I seen thee?"—And he said,
"When we are dancing round God's throne,
How often thou art there.
Beauties from thy hands have flown
Like white doves wheeling in mid air.

Nay—thy soul remembers not?
Work on, and cleanse thy iron pot."

VII

What are we? I know not.

Anna Hempstead Branch

[Born at New London, Conn., and still living there.]

WHILE LOVELINESS GOES BY

Sometimes when all the world seems grey and dun
And nothing beautiful, a voice will cry,
"Look out, look out! Angels are drawing nigh!"
Then my slow burdens leave me one by one,
And swiftly does my heart arise and run
Even like a child while loveliness goes by—
And common folk seem children of the sky,
And common things seem shapèd of the sun.
Oh, pitiful! that I who love them, must
So soon perceive their shining garments fade!
And slowly, slowly, from my eyes of trust
Their flaming banners sink into a shade!
While this earth's sunshine seems the golden dust
Slow settling from that radiant cavalcade.

Anna Hempstead Branch

THE TRAIL-MAKERS

North and west along the coast among the misty islands,
Sullen in the grip of night and smiling in the day:
Nunivak and Akutan, with Nome against the highlands,
On we drove with plated prow agleam with frozen spray.

Loud we sang adventuring and lustily we jested;
Quarreled, fought, and then forgot the taunt, the blow, the jeers;
Named a friend and clasped a hand—a compact sealed, attested;
Shared tobacco, yarns, and drink, and planned surpassing years.

Then—the snow that locked the trail where famine's shadow followed
Out across the blinding white and through the stabbing cold,
Past tents along the tundra over faces blotched and hollowed;
Toothless mouths that babbled foolish songs of hidden gold.

Wisdom, lacking sinews for the toil, gave over trying;
Fools, with thews of iron, blundered on and won the fight;
Weaklings drifted homeward; else they tarried—worse than dying—
With the painted lips and wastrels on the edges of the night.

Berries of the saskatoon were ripening and falling;
Flowers decked the barren with its timber scant and low;
All along the river-trail were many voices calling,
And e'en the whimpering Malemutes they heard—and whined to go.

Eyelids seared with fire and ice and frosted parka-edges;
Firelight like a spray of blood on faces lean and brown;
Shifting shadows of the pines across our loaded sledges,
And far behind the fading trail, the lights and lures of town.

So we played the bitter game nor asked for praise or pity:
Wind and wolf they found the bones that blazed out lonely trails. . . .
Where a dozen shacks were set, to-day there blooms a city;
Now where once was empty blue, there pass a thousand sails.

Scarce a peak that does not mark the grave of those who perished
Nameless, lost to lips of men who followed, gleaning fame
From the soundless triumph of adventurers who cherished
Naught above the glory of a chance to play the game.

Half the toil—and we had won to wealth in other station;
Rusted out as useless ere our worth was tried and known.
But the Hand that made us caught us up and hewed a nation
From the frozen fastness that so long was His alone.

. . . . . .

Loud we sang adventuring and lustily we jested;
Quarreled, fought, and then forgot the taunt, the blow, the jeers;
Sinned and slaved and vanished—we, the giant-men who wrested
Truth from out a dream wherein we planned surpassing years.

Henry Herbert Knibbs

[Born, 1874, at Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, of American parents. Now living in Los Angeles, Cal.]

MENDING WALL

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,

But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
He is all pine and I am apple-orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down!" I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there,
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.

He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

Robert Frost

[Born, 1875, in San Francisco, Cal. Took up farming at Derry, N. H., from 1900 to 1905. Since then he has taught psychology and English in various schools, academies, and Amherst College. Now living in Franconia, N. H.]

THE TUFT OF FLOWERS

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the levelled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been,—alone,

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim over night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly-weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

Robert Frost [1875-]

BIRCHES

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the line of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed

So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
(Now am I free to be poetical?)
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.

So was I once myself a swinger of birches;
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood

Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate wilfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

Robert Frost [1875-]

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I marked the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost [1875-]

THE BIRD AND THE TREE

Blackbird, blackbird in the cage,
There's something wrong to-night.
Far off the sheriff's footfall dies,
The minutes crawl like last year's flies
Between the bars, and like an age
The hours are long to-night.

The sky is like a heavy lid
Out here beyond the door to-night.
What's that? A mutter down the street.
What's that? The sound of yells and feet.
For what you didn't do or did
You'll pay the score to-night.

No use to reek with reddened sweat,
No use to whimper and to sweat.
They've got the rope; they've got the guns,
They've got the courage and the guns;

An' that's the reason why to-night
No use to ask them any more.
They'll fire the answer through the door—
You're out to die to-night.

There where the lonely cross-road lies,
There is no place to make replies;
But silence, inch by inch, is there,
And the right limb for a lynch is there;
And a lean daw waits for both your eyes,
Blackbird.

Perhaps you'll meet again some place.
Look for the mask upon the face;
That's the way you'll know them there—
A white mask to hide the face.
And you can halt and show them there
The things that they are deaf to now,
And they can tell you what they meant—
To wash the blood with blood. But how
If you are innocent?

Blackbird singer, blackbird mute,
They choked the seed you might have found.
Out of a thorny field you go—
For you it may be better so—
And leave the sowers of the ground
To eat the harvest of the fruit,
Blackbird.

Ridgely Torrence

[Born, 1875, at Xenia, Ohio. Now living in New York City.]

THE CHILD-DANCERS

A bomb has fallen over Notre Dame:
Germans have burned another Belgian town:
Russians quelled in the east: England in qualm:

I closed my eyes, and laid the paper down.

Gray ledge and moor-grass and pale bloom of
light
By pale blue seas!
What laughter of a child world-sprite,
Sweet as the horns of lone October bees,
Shrills the faint shore with mellow, old delight?
What elves are these
In smocks gray-blue as sea and ledge,
Dancing upon the silvered edge
Of darkness—each ecstatic one
Making a happy orison,
With shining limbs, to the low-sunken sun?—
See: now they cease
Like nesting birds from flight:
Demure and debonair
They troop beside their hostess' chair
To make their bedtime courtesies:
"Spokoinoi notchi!—Gute Nacht!
Bon soir! Bon soir!—Good night!"

What far-gleaned lives are these
Linked in one holy family of art?—
Dreams: dreams once Christ and Plato dreamed:
How fair their happy shades depart!

Dear God! how simple it all seemed,
Till once again
Before my eyes the red type quivered: *Slain:*
Ten thousand of the enemy.—
Then laughter! laughter from the ancient sea
Sang in the gloaming: *Athens! Galilee!*
And elfin voices called from the extinguished
light:—
"Spokoinoi notchi!—Gute Nacht!
Bon soir! Bon soir!—Good night!"

Percy MacKaye

[Born, 1875, in New York and still living there.]

TO THE VICTOR

Man's mind is larger than his brow of tears;
This hour is not my all of time; this place
My all of earth; nor this obscene disgrace
My all of life; and thy complacent sneers
Shall not pronounce my doom to my compeers
While the Hereafter lights me in the face,
And from the Past, as from the mountain's base,
Rise, as I rise, the long tumultuous cheers.

And who slays me must overcome a world:
Heroes at arms, and virgins who became
Mothers of children, prophecy and song;
Walls of old cities with their flags unfurled;
Peaks, headlands, ocean and its isles of fame—
And sun and moon and all that made me strong!

William Ellery Leonard

[Born, 1876, at Plainfield, N. J. Living at Madison, Wis. Professor of English at University of Wisconsin:]

UNREST

A fierce unrest seethes at the core
Of all existing things:
It was the eager wish to soar
That gave the gods their wings.

From what flat wastes of cosmic slime,
And stung by what quick fire,
Sunward the restless races climb!—
Men risen out of mire!

There throbs through all the worlds that are
This heart-beat hot and strong,
And shaken systems, star by star,
Awake and glow in song.

But for the urge of this unrest
These joyous spheres are mute;
But for the rebel in his breast
Had man remained a brute.

When baffled lips demanded speech,
Speech trembled into birth—
(One day the lyric word shall reach
From earth to laughing earth.)—

When man's dim eyes demanded light,
The light he sought was born—
His wish, a Titan, scaled the height
And flung him back the morn!

From deed to dream, from dream to deed,
From daring hope to hope,
The restless wish, the instant need,
Still lashed him up the slope!

. . . . . .

I sing no governed firmament,
Cold, ordered, regular—
I sing the stinging discontent
That leaps from star to star!

Don Marquis

[Born, 1878, at Walnut, Ill. Has been on the staff of several papers and is now running a column, "The Sun Dial," on *The New York Evening Sun*.]

TRIAD

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow . . . the hour
Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
Just dead.

Adelaide Crapsey

[Born, 1878, at Rochester, N. Y. Died, 1914, after struggling with a fatal illness, at Saranac Lake, N. Y.]

THE WARNING

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . .
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold?

Adelaide Crapsey [1878-1914]

ON SEEING WEATHER-BEATEN TREES

Is it as plainly in our living shown,
By slant and twist, which way the wind hath blown?

Adelaide Crapsey [1878-1914]

COOL TOMBS

When Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and Wall Street, cash and collateral turned ashes . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red haw in November or a pawpaw in May, did she wonder? does she remember? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and groceries, cheering a hero or throwing confetti and blowing tin horns . . . tell me if the lovers are losers . . . tell me if any get more than the lovers . . . in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

Carl Sandburg
[Born, 1878, at Galesburg, Ill. Now living at Maywood, Ill.]

FOG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Carl Sandburg [1878-]

NOCTURNE IN A DESERTED BRICKYARD

Stuff of the moon
Runs on the lapping sand
Out to the longest shadows.
Under the curving willows,
And round the creep of the wave line,
Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters
Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night.

Carl Sandburg [1878-]

GRASS

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.
Shovel them under and let me work—
I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.
Shovel them under and let me work.
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:
What place is this?
Where are we now?

I am the grass.
Let me work.

Carl Sandburg [1878-]

LIE-AWAKE SONG[1]

God has a house three streets away,
And every Sunday, rain or shine,
My nurse goes there her prayers to say.
She's told me of the candles fine
That, burning all night long, they keep
Because God never goes to sleep.
Then there's a steeple full of bells,
All through the dark the time it tells.

[1] From *In Deep Places* by Amelia Josephine Burr. Copyright, 1914, by George H. Doran Company, publishers.

I like to hear it in the night
And think about those candles bright.
I wonder if God stays awake
For kindness, like the Furnace-man
Who comes before it's day, to make
Our house as pleasant as he can . . .
I like to watch the sky grow blue,
And think perhaps, the whole world through,
No one's awake but just us three—
God, and the Furnace-man, and me.

Amelia Josephine Burr

[Born, 1878, in New York City.
Now living in Englewood, N. J.]

APRIL IN THE HUASTECA

Dark on the gold west,
Mexico hung inscrutable like a curtain of heavy velvet
Before a lighted shrine.
Black on the west
All Mexico stood up from the Gulf,
Colossal, perpendicular, superb;
Mexico secretly veined with metals,
Mexico preoccupied with volcanoes, palm forests,
Deserts, cities, jungles,
Plantations of coffee and maguey,
Unknown valleys, hills of iron,
Orchids.
I heard the river flash down the canyon between the
rosewoods,

And the scream of parrots going to roost above the water.
Through the tracery of bamboo plumes against the afterglow,
I saw mystery flicker along the sky-line
And vanish over Yucatan.
Exotic the thought of northern trees,
Oaks, maples, beeches,
Elms still unfledged in the early April.
For April here was wild white lilac,
Jargon of mocking-birds,
Air that glittered with the voice of a river,
Heaped shell-pink of rosewood blooms,
Bamboo feathers etched on the sunset,
And below the sunset, hanging hills like a weighted curtain of velvet
Before the shrine of an indifferent god.

Grace Hazard Conkling

[Born, 1878, in New York City. At present living in Northampton, Mass., where she is Assistant Professor of English at Smith College.]

THE CONGO[1]

(A Study of the Negro Race)

I. Their Basic Savagery

Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room,
Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable,
Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table, *A deep rolling bass.*

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Congo and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay.

Pounded on the table,
Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom,
Hard as they were able,
Boom, boom, BOOM,
With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM.
THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision.
I could not turn from their revel in derision.
THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, *More deliberate. Solemnly chanted.*
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.
Then along that riverbank
A thousand miles
Tattooed cannibals danced in files;
Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong. *A rapidly piling climax of speed and racket.*
And "BLOOD" screamed the whistles and the fifes of the warriors,
"BLOOD" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors,
"Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle,
Harry the uplands,
Steal all the cattle,
Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle,

Bing!
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM,"
A roaring, epic, rag-time tune
From the mouth of the Congo
To the Mountains of the Moon.
Death is an Elephant,
Torch-eyed and horrible,
Foam-flanked and terrible.
BOOM, steal the pygmies,
BOOM, kill the Arabs,
BOOM, kill the white men,
Hoo, Hoo, Hoo.
Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost
Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host.
Hear how the demons chuckle and yell
Cutting his hands off, down in Hell.
Listen to the creepy proclamation,
Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation,
Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay,
Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play:—
" Be careful what you do,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."

With a philosophic pause.

Shrilly and with a heavily accented meter.

Like the wind in the chimney.

All the o sounds very golden. Heavy accents very heavy. Light accents very light. Last line whispered.

II. Their Irrepressible High Spirits

Wild crap-shooters with a whoop and a call — *Rather shrill and high.*
Danced the juba in their gambling-hall
And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town,
And guyed the policemen and laughed them down
With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM. . . .

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, — *Read exactly as in first section.*
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

A negro fairyland swung into view, — *Lay emphasis on the delicate ideas. Keep as light-footed as possible.*
A minstrel river
Where dreams come true.
The ebony palace soared on high
Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky.
The inlaid porches and casements shone
With gold and ivory and elephant-bone.
And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore
At the baboon butler in the agate door,
And the well-known tunes of the parrot band
That trilled on the bushes of that magic land.

A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came *With pomposity.*
Through the agate doorway in suits of flame,
Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust
And hats that were covered with diamond-dust.
And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call
And danced the juba from wall to wall.
But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng *With a great deliberation and ghostliness.*
With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you." . . .
Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes, *With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and pomp.*
Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats,
Shoes with a patent leather shine,
And tall silk hats that were red as wine.
And they pranced with their butterfly partners there, *With growing speed and sharply marked dance-rhythm.*
Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair,
Knee-skirts trimmed with the jessamine sweet,
And bells on their ankles and little black feet.
And the couples railed at the chant and the frown

Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down.
(O rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.)

The cake-walk royalty then began
To walk for a cake that was tall as a man
To the tune of "Boomlay, boomlay, Boom,"
While the witch-men laughed, with a sinister air,
And sang with the scalawags prancing there:—
"Walk with care, walk with care,
Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo,
And all of the other
Gods of the Congo,
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Beware, beware, walk with care,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom.
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom,
Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay,
Boom."
Oh rare was the revel, and well worth while
That made those glowering witch-men smile.

With a touch of negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end.

Slow philosophic calm.

III. The Hope of their Religion

Heavy bass. With a literal imitation of camp-meeting racket, and trance.

A good old negro in the slums of the town
Preached at a sister for her velvet gown.
Howled at a brother for his low-down ways,
His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days.
Beat on the Bible till he wore it out,
Starting the jubilee revival shout.
And some had visions, as they stood on chairs,
And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs.
And they all repented, a thousand strong,
From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong
And slammed their hymn books till they shook the room
With "Glory, glory, glory,"
And "Boom, boom, BOOM."

Exactly as in the first section.

THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK,
CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK.

And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil
And showed the apostles with their coats of mail.

In bright white steel they were seated round
And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound.
And the twelve apostles, from their thrones on high,
Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:—
"Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle;
Never again will he hoo-doo you,
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

Sung to the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."

Then along that river, a thousand miles,
The vine-snared trees fell down in files.
Pioneer angels cleared the way
For a Congo paradise, for babes at play,
For sacred capitals, for temples clean.
Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean.

With growing deliberation and joy.

There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed
A million boats of the angels sailed
With oars of silver, and prows of blue
And silken pennants that the sun shone through.
'Twas a land transfigured, 'twas a new creation.
Oh, a singing wind swept the negro nation;
And on through the backwoods clearing flew:—

In a rather high key — as delicately as possible.

" Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle.
Never again will he hoo-doo you.
Never again will he hoo-doo you."

To the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices."

Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and
the men,
And only the vulture dared again
By the far, lone mountains of the moon
To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:—
" Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you.
Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you,
Mumbo . . . Jumbo . . . will . . .
hoo-doo . . . you."

Dying off into a penetrating, terrified whisper.

Vachel Lindsay

[Born, 1879, at Springfield, Ill., and still living there.]

THE EAGLE THAT IS FORGOTTEN [1]

[*John P. Altgeld. Born December 30, 1847; died March 12, 1902.*]

Sleep softly * * * eagle forgotten * * * under
the stone.
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its
own.
" We have buried him now," thought your foes, and in
secret rejoiced.
They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred
unvoiced.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *General William Booth Enters into Heaven and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay.

They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you, day after day,
Now you were ended. They praised you, * * * and laid you away.

The others that mourned you in silence and terror and truth,
The widow bereft of her pittance, the boy without youth,
The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame and the poor
That should have remembered forever, * * * remember no more.

Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they call
The lost, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones,
A hundred white eagles have risen, the sons of your sons,
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming began
The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.

Sleep softly, * * * eagle forgotten, * * * under the stone,
Time has its way with you there and the clay has its own.
Sleep on, O brave hearted, O wise man, that kindled the flame—
To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name,
To live in mankind, far, far more * * * than to live in a name.

Vachel Lindsay [1879-]

ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT *[1]

(In Springfield, Illinois)

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down,

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
He lingers where his children used to play,
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us:—as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long,
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks of men and kings.
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?
Too many peasants fight, they know not why;
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

* See pages 10, 47, 50, 119, 123, 144.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Chinese Nightingale and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn
Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free:
A league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that things must murder still,
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

Vachel Lindsay [1879-]

"HALCYON DAYS"

Ere yet the giants of modern science had gone a-slumming
in smelly slums,
And through the Ghettos and lazarettos had put in
plumbing (and pulled out plums!)
When wily wizards in inky vizards employed their talents
at homicide,
And poisoned goblets for faithless squablets by knightly
gallants were justified;
When maids were fairest, and baths were rarest, and
thaumaturgy was wrought by dames,
When courts were rotten and faith forgotten, and none
but clergy could write their names—

When he who flouted the Church, or doubted, would find
his neck fast in hempen ruff,
And saint and sinner thought eggs for dinner and beer
for breakfast the proper stuff;
When men were scary of witch and fairy, of haunted
castle, of spook and elf,
When every mixer of cough-elixir was thought a vassal
of Nick himself;
When income taxes and prophylaxis and Comic Sections
were yet unborn,
When Leagues of Nations and Spring Vacations and Fall
Elections were held in scorn—

When all brave fellows would fight duellos with sword
and dagger, with lance and mace,
When good men guzzled until, clean fuzzled, they'd reel
and stagger about the place;
When pious journeys and jousts and tourneys brought
high adventure and secret tryst,
When knives were many, but forks not any—'twas fist
to trencher, and mouth to fist!—
Oh, men had chances for true romances, for fame and
glory, and knightly acts . . .
(And childish quarrels and beastly morals, if song and
story would stick to facts!)

Edwin Meade Robinson

[Born, 1879, at Lima, Indiana. Now living in Cleveland, Ohio, where he conducts a column of prose and verse on *The Plain Dealer*. This poem is interesting as an adroit example of interior rhyming; the hidden rhymes being not only *within* the lines, but running over from line to line.]

ECHOES OF CHILDHOOD

(A Folk-Medley)

Uncle Jim

Old Uncle Jim was as blind as a mole,
But he could fiddle Virginia Reels,
Till you felt the sap run out of your heels,
Till you knew the devil had got your soul—

Down the middle and swing yo' partners,
Up agin and salute her low,
Shake yo' foot an' keep a-goin',
Down the middle an' do-se-do!

Mind yo' manners an' doan git keerless,
Swing yo' lady and bow full low,
S'lute yo' partner an' turn yo' neighbor,
Gran'-right-an-'left, and aroun' you go!

* * *

Delphy

Delphy's breast was wide and deep,
A shelf to lay a child asleep,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low;
Rocking like a lifted boat
On lazy tropic seas afloat,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low,

Delphy, when my mother died,
Taught me wisdom, curbed my pride,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low;
And when she laid her body down,
It shone, a jewel, in His crown,
Swing low, sweet chariot, swing low.

* * *

(Underneath the southern moon
I was cradled to the tune
Of the banjo and the fiddle
And the plaintive negro croon.)

* * *

MANDY'S RELIGION

I'se got religion an' I doan care
Who knows that God an' I are square,
I wuz carryin' home my mistis' wash
When God came an' spoke to me out'n de hush.

An' I th'ew de wash up inter de air,
An' I climbed a tree to de golden stair,
Ef it hadn't a been fur Mistah Wright
I'd had ter stayed dere all de night!

* * *

(Underneath the southern moon
I was cradled to the tune

Of the banjo and the fiddle
And the plaintive negro croon.)

* * *

Betsy's Boy

Betsy's boy could shuffle and clog,
Though you couldn't get him to saw a log,
Laziest boy about the place
Till he started to dance—and you saw his face!
It was all lit up like a mask of bronze
Set in a niche between temple gongs—
For he would dance and never stop
Till he fell on the floor like a spun-out top.
His feet hung loose from his supple waist,
He danced without stopping, he danced without haste.
Like Shiva the Hindu his feet were bound
In the rhythm of stars and of streams underground:

Banjo playin' and de sanded floor,
Fiddle cryin', always callin' more,
Can't help dancin' though de preacher says
Can't git to heaven doin' no sich ways,
Can't help dancin' though de devil stan's
With a pitch-fork waitin' in his brimstone han's;

Got—ter—keep—dancin',—can't—stop—now,
Got—ter—keep—dancin', I—doan—know—how . . .

Banjo playin' and de sanded floor,
Fiddle cryin', always callin' more,
People's faces lookin' scared an' white,
Hands a clappin' an' eyes starin' bright.
Can't help dancin' though de candle's dyin',
Can't help dancin' while de fiddle's cryin';
Got—ter—keep—dancin', can't—stop—now,
Got—ter—keep—dancin',—I—doan—know—how!

Alice Corbin

[Born in St. Louis, Mo. Now living in Santa Fé, New Mexico.]

PARADOX

I went out to the woods to-day
To hide away from you,
From you a thousand miles away—
But you came, too.

And yet the old dull thought would stay,
And all my heart benumb—
If you were but a mile away
You would not come.

Jessie B. Rittenhouse

[Born at Mt. Morris, N. Y. Best known as an anthologist and author of several volumes on contemporary poetry. Now living in New York City.]

LET ME LIVE OUT MY YEARS[1]

Let me live out my years in heat of blood!
Let me die drunken with the dreamer's wine!
Let me not see this soul-house built of mud
Go toppling to the dusk—a vacant shrine.

Let me go quickly, like a candle light
Snuffed out just at the heyday of its glow.
Give me high noon—and let it then be night!
Thus would I go.

And grant that when I face the grisly Thing,
My song may trumpet down the gray Perhaps.
Let me be as a tune-swept fiddlestring
That feels the Master Melody—and snaps!

John G. Neihardt

[Born, 1881, near Sharpsburg, Ill. Specialist in American folklore. Now living at Bancroft, Neb.]

THE RICH MAN

The rich man has his motor-car,
His country and his town estate.
He smokes a fifty-cent cigar
And jeers at Fate.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *The Quest* by John G. Neihardt.

He frivols through the livelong day,
He knows not Poverty, her pinch.
His lot seems light, his heart seems gay;
He has a cinch.

Yet though my lamp burns low and dim,
Though I must slave for livelihood—
Think you that I would change with him?
You bet I would!

Franklin P. Adams

[Born, 1881, in Chicago, Ill. Conducted a column of prose and verse there, and later in New York. At present, he is on the staff of *The New York Tribune*, writing, editing and arranging "The Conning Tower."]

THOSE TWO BOYS

When Bill was a lad he was terribly bad.
He worried his parents a lot;
He'd lie and he'd swear and pull little girls' hair;
His boyhood was naught but a blot.

At play and in school he would fracture each rule—
In mischief from autumn to spring;
And the villagers knew when to manhood he grew
He would never amount to a thing.

When Jim was a child he was not very wild;
He was known as a good little boy;
He was honest and bright and the teacher's delight—
To his mother and father a joy.

All the neighbors were sure that his virtue'd endure,
That his life would be free of a spot;
They were certain that Jim had a great head on him
And that Jim would amount to a lot.

And Jim grew to manhood and honor and fame
And bears a good name;
While Bill is shut up in a dark prison cell—
You never can tell.

Franklin P. Adams [1881-]

TRAIN-MATES [1]

Outside hove Shasta, snowy height on height,
A glory; but a negligible sight,
For you had often seen a mountain-peak
But not my paper. So we came to speak . . .

A smoke, a smile,—a good way to commence
The comfortable exchange of difference!
You a young engineer, five feet eleven,
Forty-five chest, with football in your heaven,
Liking a road-bed newly built and clean,
Your fingers hot to cut away the green
Of brush and flowers that bring beside a track
The kind of beauty steel lines ought to lack,—
And I a poet, wistful of my betters,
Reading George Meredith's high-hearted letters,

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Grenstone Poems* by Witter Bynner, Copyright, 1917, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

Joining betweenwhile in the mingled speech
Of a drummer, circus-man, and parson, each
Absorbing to himself—as I to me
And you to you—a glad identity!

After a time, when others went away,
A curious kinship made us choose to stay,
Which I could tell you now; but at the time
You thought of baseball teams and I of rhyme,
Until we found that we were college men
And smoked more easily and smiled again;
And I from Cambridge cried, the poet still:
"I know your fine Greek theatre on the hill
At Berkeley!" With your happy Grecian head
Upraised, "I never saw the place," you said—
"Once I was free of class, I always went
Out to the field."

Young engineer, you meant
As fair a tribute to the better part
As ever I did. Beauty of the heart
Is evident in temples. But it breathes
Alive where athletes quicken curly wreaths,
Which are the lovelier because they die.
You are a poet quite as much as I,
Though differences appear in what we do,
And I an athlete quite as much as you.
Because you half-surmise my quarter-mile
And I your quatrain, we could greet and smile.
Who knows but we shall look again and find
The circus-man and drummer, not behind

But leading in our visible estate—
As discus-thrower and as laureate?

Witter Bynner

[Born, 1881, at Brooklyn, N. Y. Has been assistant editor for various magazines as well as playwright. His home is in Windsor, Vermont.]

A FARMER REMEMBERS LINCOLN *[1]

"Lincoln?—
Well, I was in the old Second Maine,
The first regiment in Washington from the Pine Tree State.
Of course I didn't get the butt of the clip;
We was there for guardin' Washington—
We was all green.

"I ain't never ben to the theayter in my life—
I didn't know how to behave.
I ain't never ben since.
I can see as plain as my hat the box where he sat in
When he was shot.
I can tell you, sir, there was a panic
When we found our President was in the shape he was in!
Never saw a soldier in the world but what liked him.

"Yes, sir. His looks was kind o' hard to forget.
He was a spare man,

* See pages 10, 47, 50, 108, 123, 144.

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Grenstone Poems* by Witter Bynner. Copyright, 1917, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

An old farmer.
Everything was all right, you know,
But he wasn't a smooth-appearin' man at all—
Not in no ways;
Thin-faced, long-necked,
And a swellin' kind of a thick lip like.

"And he was a jolly old fellow—always cheerful;
He wasn't so high but the boys could talk to him their own ways.
While I was servin' at the Hospital
He'd come in and say, 'You look nice in here,'
Praise us up, you know.
And he'd bend over and talk to the boys—
And he'd talk so good to 'em—so close—
That's why I call him a farmer.
I don't mean that everything about him wasn't all right, you understand,
It's just—well, I was a farmer—
And he was my neighbor, anybody's neighbor.
I guess even you young folks would 'a' liked him."

Witter Bynner [1881-]

SOMETIMES

Across the fields of yesterday
He sometimes comes to me,
A little lad just back from play—
The lad I used to be.

And yet he smiles so wistfully
Once he has crept within,
I wonder if he hopes to see
The man I might have been.

Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

[Born, 1882, at Boonville, N. Y.
Now living in New York City.]

THE SLAVE

They set the slave free, striking off his chains . . .
Then he was as much of a slave as ever.

He was still chained to servility,
He was still manacled to indolence and sloth,
He was still bound by fear and superstition,
By ignorance, suspicion, and savagery . . .
His slavery was not in the chains,
But in himself. . . .

They can only set free men free . . .
And there is no need of that:
Free men set themselves free.

James Oppenheim

[Born, 1882, in St. Paul, Minn.
Now living in New York City.]

TASTING THE EARTH

In a dark hour, tasting the Earth.

As I lay on my couch in the muffled night, and the rain
lashed my window,
And my forsaken heart would give me no rest, no pause
and no peace,
Though I turned my face far from the wailing of my
bereavement. . . .
Then I said: I will eat of this sorrow to its last shred,
I will take it unto me utterly,
I will see if I be not strong enough to contain it. . . .
What do I fear? Discomfort?
How can it hurt me, this bitterness?

The miracle, then!
Turning toward it, and giving up to it,
I found it deeper than my own self. . . .
O dark great mother-globe so close beneath me . . .
It was she with her inexhaustible grief,
Ages of blood-drenched jungles, and the smoking of
craters, and the roar of tempests,
And moan of the forsaken seas,
It was she with the hills beginning to walk in the shapes
of the dark-hearted animals,
It was she risen, dashing away tears and praying to dumb
skies, in the pomp-crumbling tragedy of man . . .
It was she, container of all griefs, and the buried dust of
broken hearts,

Cry of the christs and the lovers and the child-stripped
mothers,
And ambition gone down to defeat, and the battle over-
borne,
And the dreams that have no waking. . . .

My heart became her ancient heart:
On the food of the strong I fed, on dark strange life itself:
Wisdom-giving and sombre with the unremitting love
of ages. . . .

There was dank soil in my mouth,
And bitter sea on my lips,
In a dark hour, tasting the Earth.

James Oppenheim [1882-]

THE LINCOLN CHILD*

Clearing in the forest,
In the wild Kentucky forest,
And the stars, wintry stars strewn above!
O Night that is the starriest
Since Earth began to roll—
For a Soul
Is born out of Love!
Mother love, father love, love of Eternal God—
Stars have pushed aside to let him through—
Through heaven's sun-sown deeps

* See pages 10, 47, 50, 108, 119, 144.

One sparkling ray of God
Strikes the clod—
(And while an angel-host through wood and clearing sweeps!)
Born in the wild
The Child—
Naked, ruddy, new,
Wakes with the piteous human cry and at the mother-heart sleeps.

To the mother wild berries and honey,
To the father awe without end,
To the child a swaddling of flannel—
And a dawn rolls sharp and sunny
And the skies of winter bend
To see the first sweet word penned
In the godliest human annal.

Frail Mother of the Wilderness—
How strange the world shines in
And the cabin becomes chapel
And the baby lies secure—
Sweet Mother of the Wilderness,
New worlds for you begin,
You have tasted of the apple
That giveth wisdom sure. . . .

Soon in the wide wilderness,
On a branch blown over a creek,
Up a trail of the wild coon,
In a lair of the wild bee,

The rugged boy, by danger's stress,
Learnt the speech the wild things speak,
Learnt the Earth's eternal tune
Of strife-engendered harmony—
Went to school where Life itself was master,
Went to church where Earth was minister—
And in Danger and Disaster
Felt his future manhood stir!

All about him lay the land,
Eastern cities, Western prairie,
Wild, immeasurable, grand;
But he was lost where blossomy boughs make airy
Bowers in the forest, and the sand
Makes brook-water a clear mirror that gives back
Green branches and trunks black
And clouds across the heavens lightly fanned.

Yet all the Future dreams, eager to waken,
Within that woodland soul—
And the bough of boy has only to be shaken
That the fruit drop whereby this Earth shall roll
A little nearer God than ever before.
Little recks he of war,
Of national millions waiting on his word—
Dreams still the Event unstirred
In the heart of the boy, the little babe of the wild—
But the years hurry and the tide of the sea
Of Time flows fast and ebbs, and he, even he,
Must leave the wilderness, the wood-haunts wild—
Soon shall the cyclone of Humanity

Tearing through Earth suck up this little child
And whirl him to the top, where he shall be
Riding the storm-column in the lightning-stroke,
Calm at the peak, while down below worlds rage,
And Earth goes out in blood and battle-smoke,
And leaves him with the sun—an epoch and an age!

And lo, as he grew ugly, gaunt,
And gnarled his way into a man,
What wisdom came to feed his want,
What worlds came near to let him scan!
And as he fathomed through and through
Our dark and sorry human scheme,
He knew what Shakespeare never knew,
What Dante never dared to dream—
That Men are one
Beneath the sun,
And before God are equal souls—
This truth was his,
And this it is
That round him such a glory rolls—
For not alone he knew it as a truth,
He made it of his blood, and of his brain—
He crowned it on the day when piteous Booth
Sent a whole land to weeping with world-pain—
When a black cloud blotted the sun
And men stopped in the streets to sob,
To think Old Abe was dead.
Dead, and the day's work still undone,
Dead, and war's ruining heart athrob,

And earth with fields of carnage freshly spread—
Millions died fighting,
But in this man we mourned
Those millions, and one other—
And the States to-day uniting,
North and South,
East and West,
Speak with a people's mouth
A rhapsody of rest
To him our beloved best,
Our big, gaunt, homely brother—
Our huge Atlantic coast-storm in a shawl,
Our cyclone in a smile—our President,
Who knew and loved us all
With love more eloquent
Than his own words—with Love that in real
deeds was spent. . . .

Oh, to pour love through deeds—
To be as Lincoln was!—
That all the land might fill its daily needs
Glorified by a human Cause!
Then were America a vast World-Torch
Flaming a faith across the dying Earth,
Proclaiming from the Atlantic's rocky porch,
That a New World was struggling at the birth!

O living God, O Thou who living art,
And real, and near, draw, as at that babe's birth,
Into our souls and sanctify our Earth—
Let down Thy strength that we endure

Mighty and pure
As mothers and fathers of our own Lincoln-child—
Make us more wise, more true, more strong, more mild,
That we may day by day
Rear this wild blossom through its soft petals of clay;
That hour by hour
We may endow it with more human power
Than is our own—
That it may reach the goal
Our Lincoln long has shown!
O Child, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone,
Soul torn from out our Soul!
May you be great, and pure, and beautiful—
A Soul to search this world
To be a father, brother, comrade, son,
A toiler powerful;
A man whose toil is done
One with God's Law above:
Work wrought through Love!

James Oppenheim [1882-]

AT THE AQUARIUM

Serene the silver fishes glide,
Stern-lipped, and pale, and wonder-eyed!
As through the aged deeps of ocean,
They glide with wan and wavy motion.
They have no pathway where they go,
They flow like water to and fro,

They watch with never-winking eyes,
They watch with staring, cold surprise,
The level people in the air,
The people peering, peering there:
Who wander also to and fro,
And know not why or where they go,
Yet have a wonder in their eyes,
Sometimes a pale and cold surprise.

Max Eastman

[Born, 1883, at Canandaigua, N. Y. Lecturer and editor as well as poet. Now living at Croton-on-Hudson, N. Y.]

DIOGENES

A hut, and a tree,
And a hill for me,
And a piece of weedy meadow.
I'll ask no thing,
Of God or king,
But to clear away his shadow.

Max Eastman [1883-]

SONNET

There are strange shadows fostered of the moon,
More numerous than the clear-cut shade of day. . . .
Go forth, when all the leaves whisper of June,
Into the dusk of swooping bats at play;

Or go into that late November dusk
When hills take on the noble lines of death,
And on the air the faint, astringent musk
Of rotting leaves pours vaguely troubling breath.
Then shall you see shadows whereof the sun,
Knows nothing—aye, a thousand shadows there
Shall leap and flicker and stir and stay and run,
Like petrels of the changing foul or fair;
Like ghosts of twilight, of the moon, of him
Whose homeland lies past each horizon's rim. . . .

Arthur Davison Ficke

[Born, 1883, at Davenport, Ohio, and still living there.]

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD WOMAN

She limps with halting painful pace,
  Stops, wavers and creeps on again;
Peers up with dim and questioning face,
  Void of desire or doubt or pain.

Her cheeks hang gray in waxen folds
  Wherein there stirs no blood at all.
A hand, like bundled cornstalks, holds
  The tatters of a faded shawl.

Where was a breast, sunk bones she clasps;
  A knot jerks where were woman-hips;
A ropy throat sends writhing gasps
  Up to the tight line of her lips.

Here strong the city's pomp is poured . . .
She stands, unhuman, bleak, aghast:
An empty temple of the Lord
From which the jocund Lord has passed.

He has builded him another house,
Whenceforth his flame, renewed and bright,
Shines stark upon these weathered brows
Abandoned to the final night.

Arthur Davison Ficke [1883-]

SPRING NIGHT[1]

The park is filled with night and fog,
The veils are drawn about the world,
The drowsy lights along the paths
Are dim and pearled.

Gold and gleaming the empty streets,
Gold and gleaming the misty lake,
The mirrored lights like sunken swords,
Glimmer and shake.

Oh, is it not enough to be
Here with this beauty over me?
My throat should ache with praise, and I
Should kneel in joy beneath the sky.
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love,

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Rivers to the Sea* by Sara Teasdale.

With youth, a singing voice, and eyes
To take earth's wonder with surprise?
Why have I put off my pride,
Why am I unsatisfied,—
I, for whom the pensive night
Binds her cloudy hair with light,—
I, for whom all beauty burns
Like incense in a million urns?
O beauty, are you not enough?
Why am I crying after love?

Sara Teasdale

[Born, 1884, in St. Louis, Mo.
Now living in New York City.]

I SHALL NOT CARE[1]

When I am dead and over me bright April
  Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Though you should lean above me broken-hearted,
  I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
  When rain bends down the bough;
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
  Than you are now.

Sara Teasdale [1884-]

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Love Songs* by Sara Teasdale.

NIGHT SONG AT AMALFI[1]

I asked the heaven of stars
  What I should give my love—
It answered me with silence,
  Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea
  Down where the fishes go—
It answered me with silence,
  Silence below.

Oh, I could give him weeping,
  Or I could give him song—
But how can I give silence
  My whole life long?

Sara Teasdale [1884-]

THE DRUG CLERK

The drug clerk stands behind the counter
Young and dapper and debonair. . . .

Before him burn the great unwinking lights
The hectic stars of city nights,
Red as hell's pit, green as a mermaid's hair.
A queer half-acrid smell is in the air.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Love Songs* by Sara Teasdale.

Behind him on the shelves in ordered rows
With strange, abbreviated names
Dwell half the facts of life. That young man knows,
Bottled and boxed and powdered here,
Dumb tragedies, deceptions, secret shames,
And comedy and fear.

Sleep slumbers here, like a great quiet sea
Shrunk to this bottle's compass; sleep that brings
Sweet respite from the teeth of pain
To those poor tossing things
That the white nurses watch so thoughtfully.
And here again
Dwell the shy souls of Maytime flowers
That shall make sweeter still those poignant hours
When wide-eyed youth looks on the face of love.
And, for those others who have found too late
The bitter fruits thereof,
Here are cosmetics, powders, paints,—the arts
That hunted women use to hunt again
With scented flesh for bait.
And here is comfort for the hearts
Of sucking babes in their first teething pain.
Here dwells the substance of huge fervid dreams,
Fantastic, many-colored, shot with gleams
Of ecstasy and madness, that shall come
To some pale, twitching sleeper in a bunk.
And here is courage, cheaply bought
To cure a blue sick funk,
And dearly paid for in the final sum.
Here in this powdered fly is caught

Desire more ravishing than Tarquin's. . . .
And at last
When the one weary hope is past
Here is the sole escape,
The little postern in the house of breath
Where pallid fugitives keep tryst with death.

All this the drug clerk knows and there he stands,
Young and dapper and debonair. . . .
He rests a pair of slender hands,
Much manicured, upon the counter there
And speaks: "No, we don't carry no pomade,
We only cater to the high-class trade."

Eunice Tietjens

[Born, 1884, in Chicago, Ill. Still living there.]

BALLAD FOR GLOOM

For God, our God is a gallant foe
That playeth behind the veil.

I have loved my God as a child at heart
That seeketh deep bosoms for rest,
I have loved my God as a maid to man—
But lo, this thing is best:

To love your God as a gallant foe that plays behind the veil;
To meet your God as the night winds meet beyond Arcturus' pale.

I have played with God for a woman,
I have staked with my God for truth,
I have lost to my God as a man, clear-eyed—
His dice be not of ruth.

For I am made as a naked blade,
But hear ye this thing in sooth:

Who loseth to God as man to man
Shall win at the turn of the game.
I have drawn my blade where the lightnings meet
But the ending is the same:
Who loseth to God as the sword blades lose
Shall win at the end of the game.

For God, our God is a gallant foe that playeth behind the veil.
Whom God deigns not to overthrow hath need of triple mail.

Ezra Pound

[Born, 1884, at Haley, Idaho. Now living in London, England.]

Δωρια

Be in me as the eternal moods
of the bleak wind, and not
As transient things are—
gaiety of flowers.
Have me in the strong loneliness
of sunless cliffs

And of gray waters.
Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter,
the shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember thee.

Ezra Pound [1884-]

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

Ezra Pound [1884-]

PRAYER

God, though this life is but a wraith,
Although we know not what we use,
Although we grope with little faith,
Give me the heart to fight—and lose.

Ever insurgent let me be,
Make me more daring than devout;
From sleek contentment keep me free,
And fill me with a buoyant doubt.

Open my eyes to visions girt
With beauty, and with wonder lit—
But always let me see the dirt,
And all that spawn and die in it.

Open my ears to music; let
Me thrill with Spring's first flutes and drums—
But never let me dare forget
The bitter ballads of the slums.

From compromise and things half done,
Keep me with stern and stubborn pride;
And when at last the fight is won,
God, keep me still unsatisfied.

Louis Untermeyer

[Born, 1885, in New York City and still living there.]

SUMMONS

The eager night and the impetuous winds,
The hints and whispers of a thousand lures,
And all the swift persuasion of the Spring,
Surged from the stars and stones, and swept me on . . .
The smell of honeysuckles, keen and clear,
Startled and shook me, with the sudden thrill
Of some well-known but half-forgotten voice.
A slender stream became a naked sprite,
Flashed around curious bends, and winked at me
Beyond the turns, alert and mischievous.
A saffron moon, dangling among the trees,
Seemed like a toy balloon caught in the boughs,
Flung there in sport by some too-mirthful breeze . . .

And as it hung there, vivid and unreal,
The whole world's lethargy was brushed away;
The night kept tugging at my torpid mood
And tore it into shreds. A warm air blew
My wintry slothfulness beyond the stars;
And over all indifference there streamed
A myriad urges in one rushing wave . . .
Touched with the lavish miracles of earth,
I felt the brave persistence of the grass;
The far desire of rivulets; the keen,
Unconquerable fervor of the thrush;
The endless labors of the patient worm;
The lichen's strength; the prowess of the ant;
The constancy of flowers; the blind belief
Of ivy climbing slowly toward the sun;
The eternal struggles and eternal deaths—
And yet the groping faith of every root!
Out of old graves arose the cry of life;
Out of the dying came the deathless call.
And, thrilling with a new sweet restlessness,
The thing that was my boyhood woke in me—
Dear, foolish fragments made me strong again;
Valiant adventures, dreams of those to come,
And all the vague, heroic hopes of youth,
With fresh abandon, like a fearless laugh,
Leaped up to face the heaven's unconcern. . . .

And then—veil upon veil was torn aside—
Stars, like a host of merry girls and boys,
Danced gaily 'round me, plucking at my hand;
The night, scorning its stubborn mystery,

Leaned down and pressed new courage in my heart;
The hermit-thrush, throbbing with more Song,
Sang with a happy challenge to the skies;
Love and the faces of a world of children
Swept like a conquering army through my blood.
And Beauty, rising out of all its forms,
Beauty, the passion of the universe,
Flamed with its joy, a thing too great for tears,
And, like a wine, poured itself out for me
To drink of, to be warmed with, and to go
Refreshed and strengthened to the ceaseless fight;
To meet with confidence the cynic years;
Battling in wars that never can be won,
Seeking the lost cause and the brave defeat.

Louis Untermeyer [1885-]

ON THE BIRTH OF A CHILD

Lo, to the battle-ground of Life,
  Child, you have come, like a conquering shout,
Out of a struggle—into strife;
  Out of a darkness—into doubt.

Girt with the fragile armor of youth,
  Child, you must ride into endless wars,
With the sword of protest, the buckler of truth,
  And a banner of love to sweep the stars.

About you the world's despair will surge;
  Into defeat you must plunge and grope.
Be to the faltering an urge;
  Be to the hopeless years a hope!

Be to the darkened world a flame;
Be to its unconcern a blow—
For out of its pain and tumult you came,
And into its tumult and pain you go.

Louis Untermeyer [1885-]

AUTUMN

(TO MY MOTHER)

How memory cuts away the years,
And how clean the picture comes
Of autumn days, brisk and busy;
Charged with keen sunshine.
And you, stirred with activity,
The spirit of those energetic days.

There was our back-yard,
So plain and stripped of green,
With even the weeds carefully pulled away
From the crooked red bricks that made the walk,
And the earth on either side so black.

Autumn and dead leaves burning in the sharp air.
And winter comforts coming in like a pageant.
I shall not forget them:—
Great jars laden with the raw green of pickles,
Standing in a solemn row across the back of the porch,
Exhaling the pungent dill;
And in the very centre of the yard,
You, tending the great catsup kettle of gleaming copper,

Where fat, red tomatoes bobbed up and down
Like jolly monks in a drunken dance.
And there were bland banks of cabbages that came by the wagon-load,
Soon to be cut into delicate ribbons
Only to be crushed by the heavy, wooden stompers.
Such feathery whiteness—to come to kraut!
And after, there were grapes that hid their brightness under a grey dust,
Then gushed thrilling, purple blood over the fire;
And enamelled crab-apples that tricked with their fragrance
But were bitter to taste.
And there were spicy plums and ill-shaped quinces,
And long string beans floating in pans of clear water
Like slim, green fishes.
And there was fish itself,
Salted, silver herring from the city. . . .

And you moved among these mysteries,
Absorbed and smiling and sure;
Stirring, tasting, measuring,
With the precision of a ritual.
I like to think of you in your years of power—
You, now so shaken and so powerless—
High priestess of your home.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

[Born, 1886, at Zanesville, Ohio. Now living in New York City.]

OREAD

Whirl up, sea—
Whirl your pointed pines.
Splash your great pines
On our rocks.
Hurl your green over us—
Cover us with your pools of fir.

"H. D."

[The pen name of Hilda Doolittle, wife of Richard Aldington—both of them being among the leading Imagist poets. She was born in Bethlehem, Pa., in 1886. Now living in England.]

PEAR TREE

Silver dust
lifted from the earth,
higher than my arms reach,
you have mounted.
O silver,
higher than my arms reach
you front us with great mass;

no flower ever opened
so staunch a white leaf,
no flower ever parted silver
from such rare silver;

O white pear,
your flower-tufts,
thick on the branch,
bring summer and ripe fruits
in their purple hearts.

"H. D." [1886-]

LINCOLN *

I

Like a gaunt, scraggly pine
Which lifts its head above the mournful sandhills;
And patiently, through dull years of bitter silence,
Untended and uncared for, begins to grow.

Ungainly, labouring, huge,
The wind of the north has twisted and gnarled its branches;
Yet in the heat of midsummer days, when thunder-clouds ring the horizon,
A nation of men shall rest beneath its shade.

And it shall protect them all,
Hold everyone safe there, watching aloof in silence;
Until at last one mad stray bolt from the zenith
Shall strike it in an instant down to earth.

II

There was a darkness in this man; an immense and hollow darkness,
Of which we may not speak, nor share with him, nor enter;
A darkness through which strong roots stretched downwards into the earth

* See pages 10, 47, 50, 108, 119, 123.

Towards old things;
Towards the herdman-kings who walked the earth and spoke with God,
Towards the wanderers who sought for they knew not what, and found their goal at last;
Towards the men who waited, only waited patiently when all seemed lost,
Many bitter winters of defeat;
Down to the granite of patience
These roots swept, knotted fibrous roots, prying, piercing, seeking,
And drew from the living rock and the living waters about it
The red sap to carry upwards to the sun.

Not proud, but humble,
Only to serve and pass on, to endure to the end through service;
For the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and all that bring not forth good fruit
Shall be cut down on the day to come and cast into the fire.

III

There is silence abroad in the land to-day,
And in the hearts of men, a deep and anxious silence;
And, because we are still at last, those bronze lips slowly open,
Those hollow and weary eyes take on a gleam of light.

Slowly a patient, firm-syllabled voice cuts through the endless silence
Like labouring oxen that drag a plow through the chaos of rude clay-fields:
"I went forward as the light goes forward in early spring,
But there were also many things which I left behind.

"Tombs that were quiet;
One, of a mother, whose brief light went out in the darkness,
One, of a loved one, the snow on whose grave is long falling,
One, only of a child, but it was mine.

Have you forgot your graves? Go, question them in anguish,
Listen long to their unstirred lips. From your hostages to silence,
Learn there is no life without death, no dawn without sun-setting,
No victory but to Him who has given all."

IV

The clamour of cannon dies down, the furnace-mouth of the battle is silent.
The midwinter sun dips and descends, the earth takes on afresh its bright colours.
But he whom we mocked and obeyed not, he whom we scorned and mistrusted,
He has descended, like a god, to his rest.

Over the uproar of cities,
Over the million intricate threads of life wavering and crossing,
In the midst of problems we know not, tangling, perplexing, ensnaring,
Rises one white tomb alone.

Beam over it, stars.
Wrap it round, stripes—stripes red for the pain that he bore for you—
Enfold it forever, O flag, rent, soiled, but repaired through your anguish;
Long as you keep him there safe, the nations shall bow to your law.

Strew over him flowers;
Blue forget-me-nots from the north, and the bright pink arbutus
From the east, and from the west rich orange blossoms,
But from the heart of the land take the passion-flower.

Rayed, violet, dim,
With the nails that pierced, the cross that he bore and the circlet,
And beside it there, lay also one lonely snow-white magnolia,
Bitter for remembrance of the healing which has passed.

John Gould Fletcher

[Born, 1886, in Little Rock, Ark. Although he belongs to the Imagist group, in this poem he shows the influence of Whitman and the rhapsodists. Now living in England.]

THE SKATERS

Black swallows swooping or gliding
In a flurry of entangled loops and curves;
The skaters skim over the frozen river.
And the grinding click of their skates as they impinge
upon the surface,
Is like the brushing together of thin wing-tips of silver.

John Gould Fletcher [1886-]

IN PASSING

Through the dim window, I could see
The little room—a sordid square
Of helter-skelter penury:
Piano, whatnot, splintered chair. . . .

It is so small a room that I
Seemed almost at the woman's side:
Galled jade—too fat for vanity,
And far too frankly old for pride.

Her greasy apron 'round her waist;
The dish cloth by her on the chair;
As if in some wild headlong haste,
She has come in and settled there.

Grimly she bends her back and tries
To stab the keys, with heavy hand;
A child's first finger exercise
Before her on the music stand.

Roy Helton

[Born, 1886, in Washington, D. C. At present is teaching in Philadelphia, Pa.]

SUNDAY EVENING IN THE COMMON

Look—on the topmost branches of the world
The blossoms of the myriad stars are thick;
Over the huddled rows of stone and brick,
A few, sad wisps of empty smoke are curled
Like ghosts, languid and sick.

One breathless moment now the city's moaning
Fades, and the endless streets seem vague and dim;
There is no sound around the whole world's rim,
Save in the distance a small band is droning
Some desolate old hymn.

Van Wyck, how often have we been together
When this same moment made all mysteries clear;
—The infinite stars that brood above us here,
And the gray city in the soft June weather,
So tawdry and so dear!

John Hall Wheelock

[Born, 1886, at Far Rockaway, L. I. Now living in New York City.]

HIS ALLY

He fought for his soul, and the stubborn fighting
Tried hard his strength.
"One needs seven souls for this long requiting,"
He said at length.

"Six times have I come where my first hope jeered me
And laughed me to scorn;
But now I fear as I never feared me
To fall forlorn.

"God! when they fight upright and at me
I give them back
Even such blows as theirs that combat me;
But now, alack!

"They fight with the wiles of fiends escaping
And underhand.
Six times, O God, and my wounds are gaping!
I—reel to stand.

"Six battles' span! By this gasping breath,
No pantomime.
'Tis all that I can. I am sick unto death.
And—a seventh time?

"This is beyond all battles' soreness!"
Then his wonder cried:
For Laughter, with shield and steely harness,
Stood up at his side!

William Rose Benét

[Born, 1886, at Fort Hamilton, New York Harbor. Living in New York City.]

HOW TO CATCH UNICORNS

Its cloven hoofprint on the sand
Will lead you—where?
Into a phantasmagoric land—
Beware!

There all the bright streams run up-hill.
The birds on every tree are still.
But from stocks and stones, clear voices come
That should be dumb.

If you have taken along a net,
A noose, a prod,
You'll be waiting in the forest yet . . .
Nid—nod!

In a virgin's lap the beast slept sound,
They say . . . but I—
I think (Is anyone around?)
That's just a lie!

If you have taken a musketoon
To flinders 'twill flash 'neath the wizard moon.
So I should take browned batter-cake,
Hot-buttered inside, like foam to flake.

And I should take an easy heart
And a whimsical face,
And a tied-up lunch of sandwich and tart,
And spread a cloth in the open chase.

And then I should pretend to snore . . .

And I'd hear a snort and I'd hear a roar,
The wind of a mane and a tail, and four
Wild hoofs prancing the forest-floor.

And I'd open my eyes on a flashing horn—
And see the Unicorn!

Paladins fierce and virgins sweet . . .
But he's never had anything to eat!
Knights have tramped in their iron-mong'ry . . .
But nobody thought—that's all!—*he's hungry!*

ADDENDUM

Really hungry! Good Lord deliver us,
The Unicorn is not *carnivorous!*

William Rose Benét [1886-]

TREES [1]

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

[1] From *Trees and other Poems* by Joyce Kilmer. Copyright, 1914, by George H. Doran Company, publishers.

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Joyce Kilmer

[Born, 1886, at New Brunswick, N. J. Killed in action in France, 1918.]

LITTLE THINGS

There's nothing very beautiful and nothing very gay
About the rush of faces in the town by day;
But a light tan cow in a pale green mead,
That is very beautiful, beautiful indeed . . .
And the soft March wind and the low March mist
Are better than kisses in a dark street kissed . . .
The fragrance of the forest when it wakes at dawn,
The fragrance of a trim green village lawn,
The hearing of the murmur of the rain at play—
These things are beautiful, beautiful as day!
And I shan't stand waiting for love or scorn
When the feast is laid for a day new-born . . .

Oh, better let the little things I loved when little
Return when the heart finds the great things brittle;
And better is a temple made of bark and thong
Than a tall stone temple that may stand too long.

Orrick Johns

[Born, 1887, in St. Louis, Mo., and still living there.]

"I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH"[1]

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade
And apple-blossoms fill the air—
I have a rendezvous with Death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
And lead me into his dark land
And close my eyes and quench my breath—
It may be I shall pass him still.
I have a rendezvous with Death
On some scarred slope of battered hill,
When Spring comes round again this year
And the first meadow-flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,

[1] From *Poems* by Alan Seeger. Copyright, 1916, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

Alan Seeger

[Born, 1888, in New York City. Killed on the field of Belloy-en-Santerre, France, July 4, 1916.]

THE BUILDER [1]

Smoothing a cypress beam
With a scarred hand,
I saw a carpenter
In a far land.

Down past the flat roofs
Poured the white sun;
But still he bent his back,
The patient one.

And I paused surprised
In that queer place
To find an old man
With a haunting face.

[1] Taken by permission from *Lanterns in Gethsemane* by Willard Wattles. Copyright, 1918, by E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

"Who art thou, carpenter,
Of the bowed head;
And what buildest thou?"
"Heaven," he said.

Willard Wattles

[Born, 1888, in Bayneville, Kan.
Now living in Lawrence, Kan.]

CREEDS

How pitiful are little folk—
They seem so very small;
They look at stars, and think they are
Denominational.

Willard Wattles [1888-]

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES

They say that dead men tell no tales!

Except of barges with red sails
And sailors mad for nightingales;

Except of jongleurs stretched at ease
Beside old highways through the trees;

Except of dying moons that break
The hearts of lads who lie awake;

Except of fortresses in shade,
And heroes crumbled and betrayed.

But dead men tell no tales, they say!

Except old tales that burn away
The stifling tapestries of day:

Old tales of life, of love and hate,
Of time and space, and will, and fate.

Haniel Long

[Born, 1888, at Rangoon, Burmah; educated at Exeter and Harvard. Now teaching at Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pa.]

FACTORIES

I have shut my little sister in from life and light
(For a rose, for a ribbon, for a wreath across my hair),
I have made her restless feet still until the night,
Locked from sweets of summer and from wild spring air;
I who ranged the meadowlands, free from sun to sun,
Free to sing and pull the buds and watch the far wings fly,
I have bound my sister till her playing time was done—
Oh, my little sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of her day of maidenhood
(For a robe, for a feather, for a trinket's restless spark),
Shut from love till dusk shall fall, how shall she know good,
How shall she go scatheless through the sin-lit dark?

I who could be innocent, I who could be gay,
I who could have love and mirth before the light went by,
I have put my sister in her mating-time away—
Sister, my young sister, was it I? Was it I?

I have robbed my sister of the lips against her breast,
(For a coin, for the weaving of my children's lace and lawn),
Feet that pace beside the loom, hands that cannot rest—
How can she know motherhood, whose strength is gone?
I who took no heed of her, starved and labor-worn,
I, against whose placid heart my sleepy gold-heads lie,
Round my path they cry to me, little souls unborn—
God of Life! Creator! It was I! It was I!

Margaret Widdemer

[Born at Doylestown, Pa. At present living at Larchmont Manor, N. Y.]

MORNING SONG FROM "SENLIN"

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
When the light drips through the shutters like the dew,
I arise, I face the sunrise,
And do the things my fathers learned to do.
Stars in the purple dusk above the rooftops
Pale in a saffron mist and seem to die,
And I myself on swiftly tilting planet
Stand before a glass and tie my tie.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

It is morning. I stand by the mirror
And tie my tie once more.
While waves far off in a pale rose twilight
Crash on a white sand shore.
I stand by a mirror and comb my hair:
How small and white my face!—
The green earth tilts through a sphere of air
And bathes in a flame of space.
There are houses hanging above the stars
And stars hung under a sea . . .
And a sun far off in a shell of silence
Dapples my walls for me. . . .

It is morning, Senlin says, and in the morning
Should I not pause in the light to remember God?
Upright and firm I stand on a star unstable,
He is immense and lonely as a cloud.
I will dedicate this moment before my mirror
To him alone, for him I will comb my hair.
Accept these humble offerings, clouds of silence!
I will think of you as I descend the stair.

Vine-leaves tap my window,
The snail-track shines on the stones;
Dew-drops flash from the chinaberry tree
Repeating two clear tones.

It is morning, I awake from a bed of silence,
Shining I rise from the starless waters of sleep.
The walls are about me still as in the evening,
I am the same, and the same name still I keep.
The earth revolves with me, yet makes no motion,
The stars pale silently in a coral sky.
In a whistling void I stand before my mirror,
Unconcerned, and tie my tie.

There are horses neighing on far-off hills
Tossing their long white manes,
And mountains flash in the rose-white dusk,
Their shoulders black with rains. . . .
It is morning, I stand by the mirror
And surprise my soul once more;
The blue air rushes above my ceiling,
There are suns beneath my floor. . . .

. . . It is morning, Senlin says, I ascend from darkness
And depart on the winds of space for I know not where;
My watch is wound, a key is in my pocket,
And the sky is darkened as I descend the stair.
There are shadows across the windows, clouds in heaven,
And a god among the stars; and I will go
Thinking of him as I might think of daybreak
And humming a tune I know. . . .

Vine-leaves tap at the window,
Dew-drops sing to the garden stones,
The robin chirps in the chinaberry tree
Repeating three clear tones.

Conrad Aiken

[Born, 1889, at Savannah, Ga. Now living at South Yarmouth, Mass.]

OLD MANUSCRIPT

The sky
is that beautiful old parchment
in which the sun
and the moon
keep their diary.
To read it all,
one must be a linguist
more learned than Father Wisdom;
and a visionary
more clairvoyant than Mother Dream.
But to feel it,
one must be an apostle:
one who is more than intimate
in having been, always,
the only confidant—
like the earth
or the sea.

Alfred Kreymborg

[The leader of the group known as *"Others"*. He has edited their magazine and the two anthologies of their work. He lives in New York City.]

POET TO HIS LOVE

An old silver church in a forest
Is my love for you.
The trees around it
Are words that I have stolen from your heart.
An old silver bell, the last smile you gave,
Hangs at the top of my church.
It rings only when you come through the forest
And stand beside it.
And then, it has no need for ringing,
For your voice takes its place.

Maxwell Bodenheim

[Born, 1892, in Natchez, Miss. One of the most decorative and imaginative of the younger insurgents. Now living in New York City.]

TO A POST-OFFICE INKWELL

How many humble hearts have dipped
In you, and scrawled their manuscript!
Have shared their secrets, told their cares,
Their curious and quaint affairs!

Your pool of ink, your scratchy pen,
Have moved the lives of unborn men,
And watched young people, breathing hard,
Put Heaven on a postal card.

Christopher Morley

[Born, 1890, at Haverford, Pa. Is at present an editorial writer and columnist on the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*. His home is in Wyncote, Pa.]

GOD'S WORLD

O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!
Thy mists that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with colour! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,
But never knew I this;
Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me,—let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

[Born, 1892, in Camden, Maine. Her remarkable long poem *Renascence,* written at the age of nineteen, brought her sudden notice. She is now living in New York City.]

SEARCHLIGHTS

Tingling shafts of light,
Like gigantic staffs
Brandished by blind, invisible hands,
Cross and recross each other in the sky,
Frantically—

Groping among the stars—stubbing themselves against
the bloated clouds—
Tapping desperately for a sure foothold
In the fluctuating mists.

Calm-eyed and inaccessible
The stars peer through the blue fissures of the sky,
Unperturbed among the panic of scurrying beams;
Twinkling with a cold, acrid merriment.

Alter Brody

[Born, 1895, in Kartúshkya-Beróza, province of Grodno, Russia. Came to America at the age of eight. Now living in New York City.]

PORTRAIT OF A BOY

After the whipping, he crawled into bed;
Accepting the harsh fact with no great weeping.
How funny uncle's hat had looked striped red!
He chuckled silently. The moon came, sweeping
A black frayed rag of tattered cloud before
In scorning; very pure and pale she seemed,
Flooding his bed with radiance. On the floor
Fat motes danced. He sobbed; closed his eyes and
dreamed.

Warm sand flowed round him. Blurts of crimson light
Splashed the white grains like blood. Past the cave's
mouth
Shone with a large fierce splendor, wildly bright,
The crooked constellations of the South;
Here the Cross swung; and there, affronting Mars,

The Centaur stormed aside a froth of stars.
Within, great casks like wattled aldermen
Sighed of enormous feasts, and cloth of gold
Glowed on the walls like hot desire. Again,
Beside webbed purples from some galleon's hold,
A black chest bore the skull and bones in white
Above a scrawled "Gunpowder!" By the flames,
Decked out in crimson, gemmed with syenite,
Hailing their fellows by outrageous names
The pirates sat and diced. Their eyes were moons.
"Doubloons!" they said. The words crashed gold.
Doubloons!"

Stephen Vincent Benét

[Born, 1898, at Bethlehem, Pa.; a brother of William Rose Benét. Now living in New York.]

"The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky—
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
But East and West will pinch the heart
That cannot keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat—the sky
Will cave in on him by and by."

—Edna St. Vincent Millay.

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